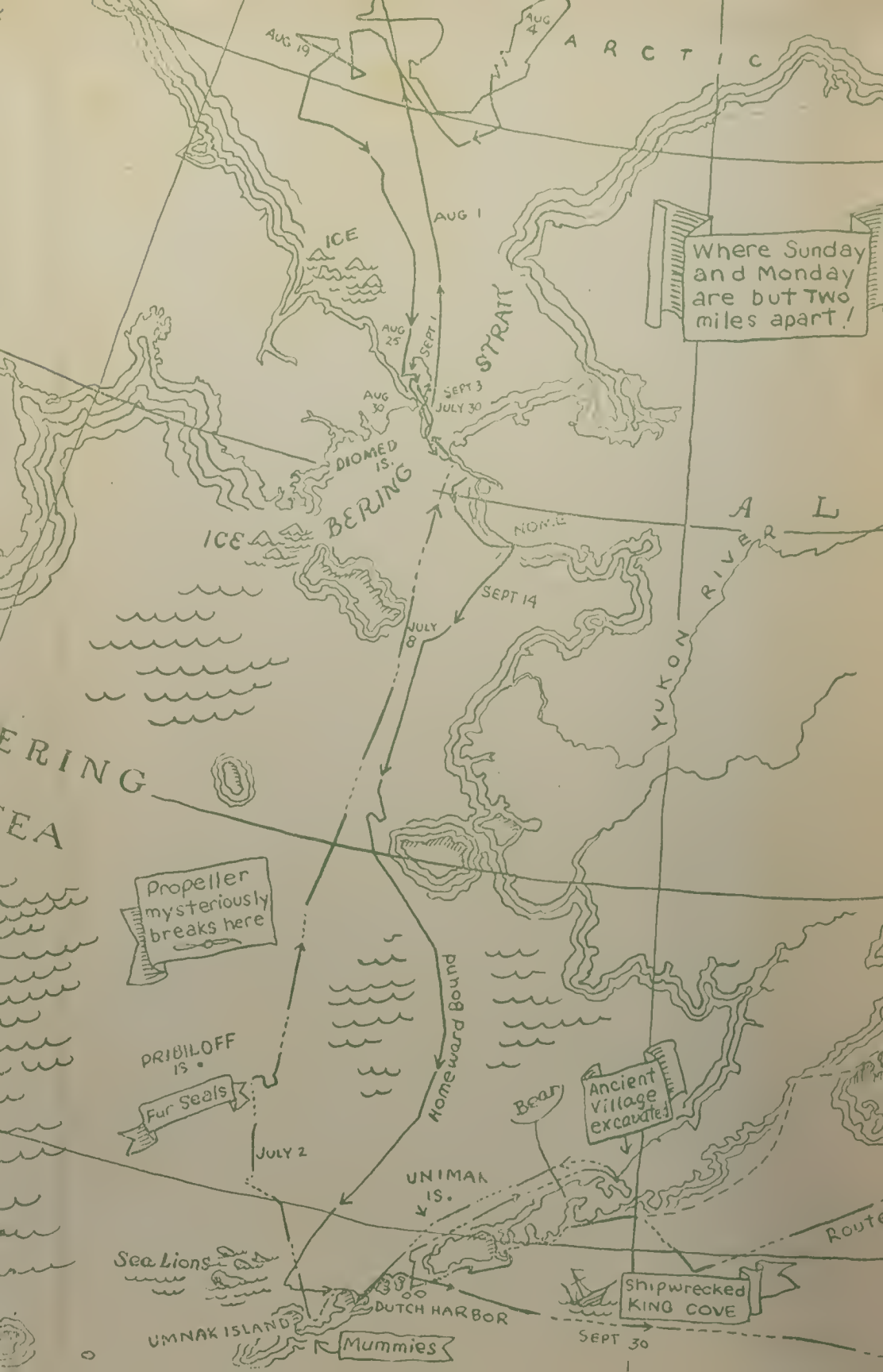
GOD'S FROZEN CHILDREN

HAROLD McCRACKEN


ARCTIC
AUG 19
AUG 4
AUG 1
ICE
AUG 25
SEPT 1
STRAIT
Where Sunday and Monday are but Two miles apart!
AUG 30
SEPT 3
JULY 30
DIOMED IS.
BERING
ICE
NOME
SEPT 14
JULY 8
YUKON RIVER
ERING
EA
Propeller mysteriously breaks here
PRIBILOFF IS.
Fur Seals
JULY 2
Homeward Bound
Bear
Ancient Village excavated
UNIMAK IS.
Sea Lions
DUTCH HARBOR
UMNAK ISLAND
Mummies
Shipwrecked KING COVE
SEPT 30

A N
S K A
FAIRBANKS
DAWSON
YUKON
DOMINION
OF
CANADA
MY GOLD MINE
MOUNT LOGAN
VALDEZ
"DIRTY DORA'S" ROUTE
JUNEAU
PETERSBURG
KETCHIKAN
GULF OF ALASKA
Schooner MORRISSEY from PRINCE RUPERT
To PRINCE RUPERT
TO NEW YORK VIA PANAMA
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GOD'S FROZEN CHILDREN

PLACID IN AN OBLIVION *that has lasted hundreds of years—the head of an Arctic Tutankhamen. Lost in the wastes of the icy North, this strange and important relic of a vanished civilization was discovered by Harold McCracken on a tiny island in the Arctic.*

GOD'S FROZEN CHILDREN

"Since, then, the wisest are as dull as we,
In one grave maxim let us all agree—
Nature ne'er meant her secrets should be found
And Man's a riddle, which Man can't expound!"

—PAINE: RULING PASSION

HAROLD McCRACKEN

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FIRST EDITION

TO MY MOTHER

Who let me go north in search of youthful
adventure and whose confidence has
had much to do with all that
I have to write about

272957

FOREWORD

I confess a profound distaste for forewords. When a man writes a book, if it is a good book, it doesn't need the explanatory gesture of a foreword. But before you read *God's Frozen Children* there are some things I'd like to say about it that can't very well be said later on.

In the first place, it is the story of a good many years' wanderings. The urge to go exploring along one or another of the ragged frontiers of the earth is a fairly common one, but generally there are a great many things that make it impossible to follow. Fortunately I started at an early enough age to avoid the usual hindrances. At eighteen I had left college to see what the Northwest was like. A summer driving a four-horse stage coach in the Canadian Rockies followed, and after that a winter spent in charge of a British Columbia fur-trading post. That year made me an incurable habitue of the far places. By the time I was twenty-one I had organized and led my first scientific expedition to Alaska and the Yukon. After that came other expeditions which brought to some degree of accomplishment the dreams of danger and adventure I had had as a boy. On one of them I picked up the strange story of the Arctic mummies, whose discovery takes up much of the latter part of this book.

And forewords are useful for this also—to acknowledge the help and encouragement of the many persons without whom expeditions—and books—would never come to completion. To Dr. Clark Wissler and Mr. James L. Clark of the American Museum of Natural

History, I am especially grateful; and to Mr. Julius F. Stone, who made possible my third Alaskan expedition —the expedition which secured my fine series of films of Kenai Moose and the Alaskan Brown Bear or Kodiak Grizzly. And I owe a similar debt of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Stoll, who made possible the Stoll-McCracken Siberian Arctic Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History, and who helped so materially in the discovery of the Stone Age Aleut Mummies.

To all the friends and companions in danger and hardship—Capt. Bob Bartlett, Andy Simons, Capt. Charlie Madsen, Dr. Edward Weyer, Jr., Junius Bird, Capt. Jack Hubrick, Capt. George Cunningham, X. B. Jones, Old Joe Saul, Eskimo Sam, and others whose names would fill many pages, I offer my thanks, for without them I might not be in New York, but in a much more distant and inaccessible place.

And finally, while this is not intended to be a book for scientists, Dr. Wissler was good enough to read the pages as they came from the press, and to make certain of the accuracy of the scientific facts which they contained.

Finally, if I have been able to touch these pages with any trace of the beauty and fascination of the land and the creatures of the northland, my purpose in writing them will have been accomplished.

HAROLD MCCRACKEN

GOD'S FROZEN CHILDREN

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CHAPTER I

TUTANKHAMENS OF THE ICE

THIS is primarily the story of a quest for Arctic mummies of the Stone Age on the stormiest and most desolate of all earth's islands.

Strange tales have come before out of the Far North, but none has been more weirdly entangled in enchanting folklore and pagan superstition than those of the enigmatic hidden mummies of the Aleutian Islands between Alaska and Siberia.

Over a period of more than eleven years I gathered stray bits of obscure and uncertain information and gradually pieced together what often seemed a hopeless plan of discovery. Most of this came from aged natives and gone-native white men in out-of-the-way corners along the frontier of the northland. Innumerable obstacles popped up like ghosts of departed souls, from the

beginning to the very end of the quest. Some of these were fanciful, rooted in ancient superstition, while others were very real. Yet each hindrance made the undertaking more alluring; each step that I went added some new interest to the story; while crowded in between was adventure as varied as the shades and ever changing display of the mystic northern lights. Then, when the big opportunity came at last, and I gambled the success of an elaborate expedition upon discovering some of them, eleven years of careful planning went for naught and success was realized in the most unexpected manner imaginable.

It all began on a certain evening when I was dead broke and a newcomer in a land where dead-broke newcomers are not looked upon with a great deal of favor. I had tumbled quite recently from the glorious position of being the twenty-one-year-old leader of a scientific expedition to Alaska for the museum at an important mid-Western university, to peeling potatoes and washing dishes as a work-a-way on one of the most notoriously wild and woolly coastwise ships that ever plied along the northernmost edge of the Pacific.

My obnoxious evening's work had been finished. Black Tom, the nigger czar of the *Dirty Dora's* smelly galley, had gone to his bunk in the stuffy odorous fo'c'sle. With my mackinaw turned up around my neck

I slipped along the little ship's deck toward the bow. The night was impenetrably black, and an icy wind hissed and moaned incessantly through the creaking rigging. Somewhere to the north (I had no idea how far away) lay the treacherous Alaskan coast; and to the south stretched thousands of miles of the unobstructed stormy Pacific. It was rough. The little packet rolled and wallowed in the big swells. But the air was fresh and sweet, and my lungs were choked with the greasy odors of the galley. I damned the country, and I damned the lure of adventure which had enticed me into such a forsaken land, as I groped my way along the swerving deck.

At the bow, in a shelter from the wind-driven icy spray, I caught a glimpse of a face as it momentarily bent over the dim binnacle light in the pilot house above me. It was like an apparition in the otherwise black room at the front of the boat's superstructure. I got but a fleeting peek at it, as it bent over the compass, yet I knew that it was the *Dora's* mate.

"The mate's on duty," I thought half aloud to myself. "The skipper's gone to bed."

I was soon shivering in the cold, for it was past the middle of October, and the Alaskan winter was moving down from the north. Yet I dreaded to go down to my bunk, filled with the foul odors of the "bull pen." Gripped with an impulse of boldness, I made my way

up the short stairs to the pilot-house door, pulled it open, and slammed it shut behind me as I stepped inside.

"Bad night, boy," said the mate, and I knew from the tone of his voice that my presence was tolerated, if not welcome.

I moved to where he was bending over a pencil-marked tobacco-stained chart tacked flat on the table, his gangling elbows sprawled upon it and a low-hanging tin-shaded light resting against his shoulder.

"According to this damn chart," he mused with something of a chuckle, "the old *Dora's* sailin' right on dry land at this very minute. See that point of land there? Well, it ain't there at all. It comes 'way round like this—like the Old Man's marked it in red ink. Here's where we are right now—and we're more'n a mile off shore. There's some bad rocks out there, where them red crosses is—not even marked on the chart. The old Russian charts is 'bout as good as these new ones."

The mate was an old-timer in Alaskan waters. He had come North in the stampede days to find gold, though fate had kept him tied ever since to the boats that buck their way along the Territory's stormy coastline. I don't remember his name, for he was always referred to as "mate." But it was he who first fired my imagination and started me on my quest for the mysterious mummies of the Aleutian Islands.

"You're interested in all them scientific things," he at last diverted the conversation. "Ever hear of the mummies the old natives tell about that's supposed to be hidden in the sacred caves out on the Islands of the Four Mountains?"

"Human mummies, you mean?" I queried.

"Yeah," he replied, "real people—chiefs or famous whale hunters, so they say—fixed up just like the ones they get in Egypt, though not so fancy, I guess. Long-time-ago stuff—long before the first Russians came over here. We had an old fellow on the *Dora* for a while that lives out in Unalaska, who used to tell me about them when he was doin' his hitch at the wheel. Darned int'restin'. I always did like to hear about them sort of things."

From that night until I was dumped off the *Dirty Dora* in an early winter blizzard at my destination at the western end of the Alaska Peninsula I spent an hour or so of practically every night in the pilot house with the mate; and each time I went the curious story of the mummy became more deeply rooted in my thoughts.

The information was rather vague, and his stories told on different occasions did not always jibe as to attempted details. In certain respects, however, the mate was always quite positive. "The Islands of the Four Mountains is the only place they put them. That's why there ain't

a livin' soul that'll stay on them islands even to-day. It's a mighty dangerous thing for anyone to go lookin' for them mummies, though. They're sorta like gods to the natives—got some sorta supernat'ral power about 'em. The old Aleut medicine men say that anybody that goes into the caves will have the worst kind of bad luck the rest of their days; and anybody that molests 'em or takes 'em away is sure to die in a very short time. It may just be one of them native yarns—but I once had a shipmate that got drunk and forced his way into some sort of a sacred room in a Chinese temple where he wasn't supposed to go, and the old priest put a curse upon him for it. They found him dead in his bunk the first night after we sailed from that port. It's bad business, this native witch-doctor stuff.

"There's just one white man that I know of, who ever took any of the Aleut mummies out of the caves. He was a Swede trader out on the islands that found a couple of them and started in his little schooner with a lot of other Alaskan stuff to sell at the 'Frisco Fair. He never got there with the mummies or his boat, and never was heard of afterward. Anybody out that way will tell you about it. Some funny things happen, you know. I'd be kinda careful, if I were you, if you figure on monkeyin' around to try and find any of them Aleut mummies."

That story fascinated me. There was something genuine about it, despite the fact that mummified ancient human beings in the Aleutian Islands seemed as far from a plausible reality as anything I could possibly imagine.

"If I only had not spent all my funds on a foolish attempt to climb Mount Logan," I mused to myself on many an occasion. But my present unpleasant predicament was one for which I had no one to blame but myself; and at the moment I faced far more serious problems than proving or disproving native superstitious and fanciful tales of Arctic mummies.

This was my first expedition—or *had* been. For it had ingloriously burst like a big iridescent bubble all painted with beautiful air castles. The first spring season of what I had planned to be one to two years of collecting Alaskan big game animals and birds for the museum in Columbus had been a failure. With a long string of pack horses and several guides I had pushed my way far back through the St. Elias Alps along the interior edge of the great Malaspina Glacier. I had hoped to get a group of the rare glacier bears, as well as a new variety of grizzly, mountain sheep, and other mountain varieties of Alaskan game. Then during the summer months my itinerary called for a conquest of the unscaled summit of Mount Logan, second highest peak on the American

continent, just over the boundary in the Yukon Territory.

At the end of the summer, just passed, my outfit came staggering back into the little settlement of McCarthy, close to the famous Kennecott Copper Mines, two hundred miles inland from Cordova. Our horses were bony and hungry looking. Their backs and withers were rubbed raw by the pack saddles; their legs were cut and barked from struggling over the heaps and hills of knife-edged rocks of the Malaspina's unholy moraines; and two of them had been left behind in the mountains. Our own bodies were weary from battling the steep rocky passes where we had to pick our own trail, and the treacherous glacier torrents with their burden of silt and dangerous pockets of quicksand. Our clothing was in tatters; and I had led the bedraggled procession in through the "back door" of the settlement, past the infamous row of houses on the creek, with a pair of flaming red flannel under drawers as the most intact and conspicuous part of my garb. What was left of my last pair of pants was little more than some tatters hanging to my heavy leather belt.

The worst part of it all, though, was the fact that one rather scrawny grizzly of a well known variety and four summer-killed sheep constituted the sum total of my natural history collection for the museum; and while I

had managed to get closer to the summit of Mount Logan than any previous explorer, the trip on the whole was very much of a failure—and I had spent all my funds in making it.

I had cabled the museum the facts and asked for more money to go on with what now seemed the most important part of my undertaking—the procuring of a group of the giant Alaskan brown bear, or "Kodiak grizzly," as it is popularly called. Then, somewhat disheartened, though bravely undertaking to keep my appearances, I had gone on to Seward, the jumping-off place for the land of volcanoes and biggest of all bears at the western end of the Alaska Peninsula.

At length, after I had been living on one three-cornered meal a day for more than a week, the sad news came. Literally, it read: "No specimens, no more money. You're a bum explorer, and go to hell!"—not in those words, but meaning as much.

I was broke. The Alaskan winter was close at hand. Yet my youthful Scotch pride would not permit me to return home and admit the failure. Having to live seemed the least of my considerations. To get a fine group of Kodiak grizzlies seemed the one thing which I somehow just had to do. My whole life and future seemed at stake—and four or five of the giant bears, for which I carried special hunting permits, seemed the one

salvation of the whole situation. Yet I did not have funds sufficient even to buy food for myself for the trip, to say nothing of other necessary expenses.

I bumped about the waterfront of that rough-edged little Alaskan metropolis, and at last, throwing all logic and judgment to the winds in a plunge of youthful abandon, I got a job as a work-a-way on the hardboiled packet the *S. S. Dora* (known locally as the *Dirty Dora*), which periodically carried freight and mail-order-house catalogues between Seward and Unalaska. I wrote to the editor of a well known magazine asking if he would send me a check in advance for one or two articles that I would write for him about the bears I hoped to get, and set out blindly for the stormy western tip of the continent.

It was a terrible morning that I had carried my sleeping bag and sack of grub down aboard that historic little vessel. The crew had been on a last-night's spree before setting sail on their stormy voyage. There was blood on the fo'c'sle head, where a sailor had landed head first after a disagreement with the tall lantern-jawed Swede skipper; and with a volley of vitriolic oaths I had been sent to report to the nigger cook, who held undisputed rule in *Dirty Dora's* galley.

Courting the chance of having my countenance disfigured for the rest of my natural days, I had hidden

below deck until after the boat pulled away from the Seward dock rather than sit on the deck outside the galley door and manicure a pail of potatoes within view of those who came down from town to see the boat sail for the westward.

The weather throughout the trip very amply upheld the reputation for which that stormiest of all coasts is famous: and what happened on the little packet quite fully upheld the reputation for which it was renowned.

My work-a-way tasks were varied. Each seemed more obnoxious than the other. The ship was teeming with vermin of diverse varieties. When I opened the cookie cupboard it always seemed that the walls were veritably alive with crawling scurrying little brown creatures, and each chocolate and cocoanut frosted cake that I picked to be carried to the mess hall had to be inspected to make sure that it was free of any parasitic passengers. Likewise, each morning, when it was my regular task to carry plates of hot-cakes to the crew and two passengers, I had to lift each one to make sure that a chilled cockroach had not crawled in between the warm doughy blankets while they sat on the shelf at the back of the big galley stove.

One morning I found a long-barreled blued-steel six-shooter tucked away in one of the drawers where Black Tom kept some of his personal belongings. There were

three notches filed on it, the last of which was so new that the metal had not yet tarnished over. To this day I am not certain whether the notches represented demised humans or just "straight flushes" held in the fo'c'sle poker games in which its owner was a persistent participant.

At one of the stops which the boat made to unload freight, the entire crew got lit up, like the Aurora Borealis on a clear winter night, on some of the local fur trader's home-made sourdough. At the end of the party they all came down singing Russian church songs, and while endeavoring to climb aboard from the rickety little dock the purser lost his footing and plunged into the icy water. A rope ladder was lowered over the side, but the unfortunate imbiber was unable to drag himself out. Forthwith, the trader climbed down to rescue him and was promptly pulled into the cold water himself. He was wearing a big black bearskin coat and a fabulous fur cap. The coat spread out like a parachute, and the fabulous fur cap drifted off to sea around the stern of the little ship. One of my most vivid recollections of Alaska is that of the fur trader's red bald head and bewhiskered face bobbing about amid a jumble of fur coat and brandishing arms as he puffed and struggled in a ludicrous attempt to do the rescue act.

Then the skipper climbed down the ladder with some

ropes, and the two half-drowned, half-frozen merry-makers were eventually quite unceremoniously hauled up onto the deck by several husky sailors.

The lines were cast loose, and the *Dirty Dora* swung out to sea. The coast line was soon shrouded by the driving snowstorm.

About an hour later, the trader, who had been dragged down into the engine room to get off some of his wet clothing and be warmed up, suddenly awoke to the realization that he was a passenger on the *Dora;* and having no intention of going to sea he scrambled to the deck and tried to jump overboard, apparently with the intention of swimming back to his little frontier home amid the jumble of snow-covered native *barrabaras.*

Then, suddenly struck with another idea, he blurted: "All right! I'll go out an' visit my old friend Andy at Sand Point!" And so it was decided. Between the crew and passengers we collected enough clothing for him to wear while his own was drying. I loaned him a pair of woollen drawers. "I needed a vacation, anyhow," he argued, at last emerging from the engine room in his borrowed outfit, still wabbly, though perfectly contented at the prospect of his impromptu journey.

That night was one on which I did not venture up into the pilot house to talk about Aleut mummies or other things with the mate. When my work in the gal-

ley was finished I went straight to my uninviting bunk in the bull pen and lay with my face to the damp wall, listening to the water gush along the hull and expecting any minute that the little packet would pile up on some hidden reef or plow head on into a rocky promontory of the unfriendly coast.

Nor was all this the worst of my situation. For at the end of my work-a-way nightmare I was to be dumped off, bag and baggage, in a wild little Arctic village with an unknown fate awaiting me. I knew no one there. My total capital when I had left Seward had been less than fifty dollars—and on this I had expected to hunt Kodiak grizzlies and Barren Ground caribou, make a collection of sea birds' skins, and spend the winter.

Twelve days passed—twelve long days of bucking and plowing through an incessantly stormy sea. Then at last the *Dora* rounded the rocky cliff of Bold Cape, on which I was later shipwrecked, and turned her weather-beaten prow into King Cove Bay. It was about eight o'clock on an October night. A steady downfall of big feathery snowflakes was being whipped about the ship by the "woollys" or "willey-waws" that periodically zoomed down over the obscured hills. Only two or three dim lights blinked an occasional questionable welcome from the undistinguishable little village at the head of

the cove which was presumably to be my home for the winter.

I had all of my worldly possessions fastened together in one big pack ready to be carried ashore on my own back. My spirits were particularly low, for in spite of the brawls and obnoxious work-a-way duties on the *Dirty Dora,* she had at least afforded me a warm place to sleep and plenty to eat. I seriously doubted if I would find as much in the night and snow-shrouded native village where I was very shortly to be left without feasible course of retreat.

During my natural inquiries about King Cove village and its present inhabitants, I had learned, among other things, that its population consisted of about a hundred Aleut and Russian-Aleut natives (most of whom had probably already left for their trapping grounds), and three old-timer white men. Of these latter there was one, Captain Charlie Madsen, who stood out far and above the others in point of all-round interest. He was a fur trader who operated a small trading schooner along both the Pacific and Bering Sea sides of the Alaska Peninsula and first of the Aleutians; though the most of his fifteen years "north of sixty" had been spent in trading with the natives and playing hide-and-seek with Russian gunboats along the Arctic coast of Siberia. He had personally killed probably more

polar bears and walrus than any other white man in the country. His wife was the daughter of the Eskimo chief of Cape Prince of Wales in Bering Strait; and he was a sort of blustering czar of the natives all the way from Unimak to Point Barrow and to Long Strait. But when I had learned that he had served as chief guide for an Austrian baron and an English lord, on big game hunts in the Arctic, I thought immediately of the very lonesome little family of Yankee banknotes in my hip pocket and promptly proceeded to forget about Captain Charlie Madsen.

I had become more and more convinced, the closer I got to my destination, that this would have to be a lone-wolf quest on my part. And now, as I watched the blinking lights of the little native village get larger and more distinct, I thought to myself: "I'll take to the hills alone. The most I can hope for is that fate will be kind enough to get me hurriedly tangled up with a flock of Kodiak grizzlies—probably provide me with some further and more definite clues regarding the fabulous mummies of the Aleutian Islands—and to hell with what happens after that!"

Slowly the *Dora* sidled into the little wharf, on which shadowy figures carrying lanterns now moved about or stood grouped back against the low warehouse. Occa-

sionally I caught a word or phrase exclaimed in a strange and seemingly unfriendly tongue.

The moment the little ship swung within reaching distance of the wharf a big individual swung up onto the rail and climbed aboard. He had a weatherbeaten countenance and was dressed in fur cap and fancy reindeer skin mukluks.

"Hello, Cap!" the mate called out, and beckoned to him, between bellowing his orders to the sailors who were making the ship fast to the wharf. The newcomer walked up toward the bow where the mate was standing. As they talked, an occasional glance in my direction indicated that I was the topic of conversation. Then, as soon as the ship was made fast they walked over to where I was waiting beside my duffel for the gangplank to be put out, and I was introduced to Captain Madsen.

"So you've come out here to hunt some of our big bears and Aleut mummies?" he said to me.

I hardly knew whether to say yes or no.

"Well, there are plenty of bears around here," he went on before I could reply. "Get your stuff ashore. Soon as I get some of the natives to put my freight in the warehouse we'll find a place for you to bunk tonight. To-morrow you can find a shack to live in. There

are a number of empty ones you can rent for little or nothing."

That night I spread my sleeping bag in one of the bunks in a small boat hauled out on the beach for the winter; and it was with a peculiar feeling of satisfaction that I crawled inside the warm blankets and tucked them up around my ears. At least I would not have to get up at 4 A. M. on a rolling, pitching, foul-smelling little tramp packet, to make my way to unpleasant labors in a hot stuffy galley; and I was in the land of the giant grizzlies about which I had dreamed so much the past few months. And despite the inevitable disaster which seemed not far ahead, for the first time I was just a little glad that I had come.

I slept soundly, and the sun was melting the thin covering of new snow when Captain Madsen awoke me to come and have breakfast with him.

His little two-room house was as spick and span as a proud New Englander's—a glaring contrast to all its surroundings. His wife, a plump, dimple-faced woman of unusual native beauty, moved silently about on moccasined feet as she set before us a meal of memorable excellence.

When we had finished we went into the comfortable little living and sleeping room of bare-board simplicity. He started the phonograph, and while John McCormack

sang "Mother Machree" to us in that little retreat on the far removed ragged edge of the Arctic frontier, we settled ourselves to enjoy a smoke.

"You're in a rather bad way, aren't you?" he began.

"Rather," I returned a little hesitantly.

"The mate told me all about it," he went on. "I've been thinking it over. Anybody that'll go as a work-a-way on the *Dirty Dora* under Captain Gus Swanson, as you have, just to get some big bears, I reckon must be pretty damned interested in that sort of thing."

"She's a tough boat," I put in, for lack of something better to say.

"Well, how'd you like to travel with me on my little schooner? I'll make a bargain with you. You go along and help on the boat, and I'll see that you get some damned good hunting in some of the bays we'll visit to get furs from the natives. I'll furnish the grub and everything. I won't start out for a couple of weeks or more, but in the meantime you may get a bear or two within walking distance of here."

It all sounded too good to be true.

I rented a little one-room shack in the native section, which Captain Madsen advised me had been occupied by a fairly "clean" family. It cost me the grand sum of four dollars per month. It was a "summer" house of crude frame construction, not covered over with sod

and earth as were all the "winter" dwellings. But it had a stove and some dishes—so I moved in.

The first day I spent in scouring and cleaning and getting settled in my new home. I filled up some of the largest cracks with paper, and Captain Madsen gave me an old bear hide for a rug. The second day I went back in a low pass about three miles from the village and shot a caribou for meat. In the evening I shot two geese in the lagoon. With these hanging on the north end of my shack I had at least the assurance of not starving for a while. Then, as the season was already late, I temporarily dispelled Aleut mummies from my thoughts and seriously concentrated on a lone-wolf quest for big bears. And right at the outset I got very badly tangled up with a whole flock of them.

IN PLACE OF *the old* DIRTY DORA, *the most famous rough-neck packet of the North Pacific, the* S.S. STARR, *so clean as not to be picturesque at all, now plies the old trading routes.*

THE INEVITABLE *accompaniment of modern exploration—the powerful short-wave wireless set with telephone equipment that carried the expedition's story to the outside world.*

CHAPTER II

KODIAK GRIZZLIES

IT WAS with bold abandon that I started out on my lone-wolf quest for Kodiak grizzlies. My knowledge of the peculiarities of these great creatures and the methods generally used in hunting them was quite limited; though had I known even more than I do today I could not have come to combat with my desired quarry more quickly, nor intentionally entangled myself more spectacularly, than I did on that first attempt.

The great Alaskan brown bear, or Kodiak grizzly, as he is popularly called, has the reputation of being one of the most ferocious and most powerful of all animals on the earth. He is undisputedly the largest of all present-day flesh-eating animals. His main item of food really is the salmon, of the delicatessen-store variety, which teem in untold hordes in the streams during most of the

months that he is out of his winter sleeping quarters; though a dead whale or sea lion washed up on the beach is an occasion for jubilant feasting, and he has been known to feed on fresh-killed caribou and even to fill his stomach on human flesh. The fact that members of his immediate family have probably exceeded a weight of eighteen hundred or even possibly two thousand pounds, will give some idea of the monstrous size to which he develops; though, strange to say, when born he weighs less than one pound and is blind and hairless. In brute strength he is equal to any of the bigger creatures, pound for pound and inch for inch. In agility he is actually quick enough in the dexterous use of his ponderous paws to catch a darting trout in a stream; and while his eyesight is unusually poor, there is no other creature with a keener or wiser sense of smell.

The little corner of the earth which he apparently picked out to make his home, is about as stormy and unattractive as can be found. It is a land of abominable swampy tundras, generally muggy with rain and fog and infested with stinging insects; and volcanic peaks that periodically spout smoke and hot rocks like a gigantic cannon. There is not a tree that grows on the entire five-hundred-mile extent of the Alaska Peninsula—only patches of low gnarled alder bushes not much higher than a man's head. His range extends from Uni-

mak Island, the first and largest of the Aleutians, to Kodiak Island, where the species was scientifically discovered and from which it takes its name; and very closely allied relatives are found as far down the coast as the region of the famous Inside Passage through the panhandle of the Territory and north into the Arctic. But as this is not intended as any dissertation on the scientific fine points of bearology, I will diligently refrain from the entanglements of his family tree.

With some hard-tack and a chunk of fried caribou meat in my mackinaw pocket, I left my little shack in the village and headed off along the beach around the lagoon above the extreme head of King Cove Bay. Daylight was just fading into an overcast sky that threatened more snow, and a cold strong wind was blowing down from the north.

Just as I reached the upper end of the lagoon, where a salmon stream meanders down through the valley, I was attracted by a bawling sound. Stopping to survey the hillside from which the sound came, I quickly located a real live bear walking up through the bare alders not far from the top of a low ridge. He was bawling periodically very much as though he had lost his mother and didn't know where to find her, though he appeared to be more the size of a short-legged domestic bull than a mere bear, and seemed quite big enough to take care

of himself. He disappeared just a short time after I saw him, though the distance had been too great for a satisfactory shot. This was luck indeed, however, for I was not more than two miles from the village.

Picking a landmark to guide me, I started hurriedly up toward the spot where he had gone over the ridge into a small ravine on the opposite side. I was well hardened from my recent strenuous siege in the St. Elias Alps, and it did not take me long to make the climb.

Reaching the top, I peeked over. There he was on the opposite hillside! But I decided to go farther up the ridge to be in a better position for a shot. With my heart thumping fast I ducked back and once more started worming my way through the alders.

I had not gone a dozen steps, however, when I stopped quite suddenly. Something was moving through the thicket just ahead of me. I could not see it distinctly owing to the entanglement of the branches, but it appeared big and brown, like a monster bear. I held my breath as I craned my neck back and forth in an effort to get a better view of it. Then a tremendous shaggy head, with a long Chesapeake-dog-like nose popped into sight through a small opening. It was a whopper of a grizzly! He was not more than seventy-five feet away and was headed right toward me!

Instinctively I clutched my rifle and slipped the lever

as quietly and quickly as possible to throw a shell into the barrel. Then, as I stood, a little bewildered as to what was the best thing to do, and watched the great brown body pass the little peekhole through the branches, my heart gave an even greater jump as I saw still another big head pop into view. Within a very few moments three grizzlies had filed past the opening. It seemed to be a sort of follow-the-leader affair, and the leader was heading right in my direction. A terrible feeling of panic gripped me. I doubt if at that minute I could have made the muscles of my legs function properly even if I had tried to run. I was frozen in my tracks. This was far more of a herd of Kodiak grizzlies than I had ever anticipated tackling—alone, at least. And how many more of the giant brutes, which I had not yet seen, were ambling about in that same entanglement of alders with me I hadn't the slightest idea. The country seemed to be swarming with bears!

Standing perfectly motionless, I watched the three of them waddle slowly toward me through the thicket; then they turned off to one side and disappeared over the crest of the ridge not more than forty feet from where I stood. Even then I was not sure whether to continue to stand still, proceed, or make a hasty retreat.

At last, seeing no further bears, and clutching my rifle with hands that I could not keep from trembling, I

mustered enough courage to slip very cautiously up to where I could peek over into the ravine again. The first of the four bears could be seen standing apparently watching the approach of the other three. Even while I stood there, a big broad brown back moved up into sight near the bottom of the opposite hillside and headed in the direction of the first. The other two followed close behind. I could see them all quite plainly now, and so realized quickly that it was a monster female and her family of three big yearlings. Instantly I visioned them in a wonderful museum group—with the great-granddaddy of all the big bears on the Alaska Peninsula as their papa in a permanent glass-encased setting.

They were all within reasonable range of my rifle. It was not more than seventy-five yards, at the most, to the farthest one. I raised my rifle just to line up the sights on the big one. But somehow the end of my gun seemed to be swinging around in circles—and I couldn't keep it still on any part of the mark. Breathlessly I moved about to find a place where I could sit down to rest my elbows on my knees and still have an unobstructed view of the bears.

At last, holding my breath to keep my abnormal respiration from playing havoc with my aim, I tightened my finger on the trigger and fired. The report seemed like that of a cannon. But the shock broke my high-

pitched nervous tension; the fact that my first bullet had struck its mark served as a much needed encouragement. I realized that it was really a serious affair. For I was not only alone and inexperienced, but the thing was staged under the worst possible conditions. Had they located and charged me I could not have seen them after they reached the bottom of the opposite hillside or until they were right upon me; and in the thick entanglement of alders my chances of escape would have been slight.

I blazed away time after time. Blood was literally spilled all over the opposite hillside. How I managed to dispatch the four of them without getting chewed into Scotch hamburger is still a mystery to me, for I am not a phenomenally good rifle shot under the best of conditions. But at last it was all over. Triumphant, yet trembling like an aspen leaf in a fall breeze, I stood and gazed upon four Kodiak grizzlies that had made the first day of my lone-wolf quest the most glowing accomplishment of my hunting experiences. Though I have since killed nine others of this same variety of bears, and some big ones among them, and have been at very close quarters with dozens of them while making photographs, I have not had, and never expect to have, my blood pressure come so near to the boiling point as it did on that first occasion.

They were all in exceptionally fine condition. The female was an unusually large one, the pelt measuring almost ten feet. The yearlings, wearing their second year's growth of long, almost silky, hair, were beautiful. And now all that remained to make my group the finest of its kind that had ever been collected was to get a "great-granddaddy grizzly" to go with them.

I returned to the village; hired two native boys to help me skin the bears and pack in the hides; and before dark that night I had the precious pelts piled in an empty shack not far from my own. After that the natives returned to where the bears had been shot and packed in every bit of the meat for food. They even took the intestines, from which would ultimately be made the fine Aleut raincoats, or *kamlykas,* which they wear in rainy weather.

The task of cutting the fat off the heavy hides, or "leaning" them, as the natives call it, was an arduous one. The Aleuts, like the Eskimos, are very skillful at this. I needed assistance, for Captain Madsen announced that he would soon be ready for us to take to sea. Yet my funds did not permit of being taxed with many further pay rolls.

Nevertheless, I invited old Demetri, the aged chief of the Belkofski natives, to my shack. He was not only an expert among experts in the handling of a knife, but

also knew many things which I wanted to know. I showed him my hunting knives, then my patent torchlight, some extra fancy plaid mackinaw shirts, and a few other items in my equipment which I had previously decided I could if necessary dispense with. But none of these things seemed to thrill his sense of possession. As a last resort I dragged out a heavy .44 caliber six-shooter, which I had picked up for ten dollars in a second-hand store back in the States. His smoky eyes brightened as he took the gun and handled it appraisingly. I knew, then and there, that this was the item with which I must part ownership.

At length, after some dickering, I agreed to let him have the big revolver and a couple of boxes of shells in trade for a sea-lion-skin *bidarka* or sea otter hunting canoe and his services in helping me "lean" my bear hides. I knew that the work would consume at least a couple of days, and I hoped that during this time I should also be able to draw out from the thoughts and knowledge stored up behind his wrinkled brown countenance some rare bits of lore regarding ancient mummies, the sea-otter days that were past and by most individuals forgotten, and other things not generally known of the obscure lives of his race. Incidentally, after using the bidarka throughout most of the winter, and on several occasions coming very near to getting

drowned while learning to maneuver the tipsy little craft in the lagoon, I traded it back to the same native for three red foxskins. I sold the pelts in Seward for twenty dollars apiece—and we were both very well satisfied with the diverse phases of our bartering, for as he caught the foxes they cost him nothing.

Sitting on the rough board floor of the shack, with the big grizzly hide spread out on our laps between us, I carefully led the conversation into the desired direction. At first, in true native fashion, old Demetri sat silently and thoughtfully plying his knife—answering most of my questions with brief blunt grunts. When, however, I approached the subject of sea otters and the spectacularly romantic sea-otter days that were forever past, the stolid indifference seemed to fade from his face. He nodded his gray head quite emphatically when I volunteered that the long-ago times were much better than the present, and that the trend of the younger generation was toward a less healthy and less interesting sort of life. This proved to be the key which unlocked his tongue.

Looking down disdainfully at his shoddy store-purchased clothes and flicking at them reproachfully with the point of his knife he reiterated sternly: "Long time ago, nobody wear this kind. Everybody wear sea-otter skins—somebody wear just sealskins. *Pleanty* sea otters,

long, long ago. *Pleanty* sea-lion meat for everybody eat. Everybody happy. Now, old woman have to make bread —have to go store get canned beans, canned some other things. Everybody owe debt pay storekeeper. No sea otters—not many foxes even. Hell! No good now!"

I agreed heartily to everything that he said—partly because I honestly felt the same way that he did about it, and partly because I knew this would encourage his freedom of conversation.

At last I mentioned the ancient Aleut mummies.

He glanced at me sharply—in a manner that indicated he knew considerable about them. I thrilled, as one who has made a find or solved a problem.

I asked him if he had ever seen any of them or knew where they were hidden.

"I don' know," he drawled in that typical native fashion which always indicates more a state of indifference than lack of knowledge.

But when I pressed the question by asking if he would be willing to go with me to find some of the mummies he replied quite emphatically in the negative.

"No! No!" he reiterated, with a quick little wave of his knife, as if indicating that he did not even want to talk about it. *Asxínan*[1] bad luck! Nobody go look! I talk 'bout sea otters—that all right."

[1]Asxínan is the Aleut word for mummy.

I knew from the very definite tone of his voice, that the subject of ancient mummies was one which, if ever told, must wait until old Demetri and I had become far more intimate friends, and for the time being I must be content with his tales of sea otters and the sea-otter hunting days that were past.

This aged native was one of the few old-time sea-otter hunters still remaining who could "remember when"; and he supplied that invaluable link between the information which I had collected and sifted from scattered excerpts and references in the tales of the early voyagers to that part of the world, and the first-hand knowledge of the more intimate phases of the subject. He knew nothing, of course, as to why the Russians had come to settle in his country. The home ports of the ships that sailed to his village from over the brink of the horizon and then back again were even now far beyond his wildest imagination. But what he lacked in this respect was quite amply made up for by his intimate knowledge of what to most white men are the most mysterious phases of his stormy homeland.

That sea otters and their hunting had been the greatest interest of his younger days was quite evident. With enthusiastic effort he undertook to tell me in detail many of the interesting things about those little-known

creatures of the sea; often supplementing his rather awkward explanations with pictures drawn on the fatty bear hide with the point of his knife.

No other creature which has been hunted by man for pleasure or profit has occupied a more spectacularly important position in the making of frontier history than the sea otter. They were, to exploration and settlement of the Northwestern coast of our continent by the Russians, what gold was to California and the Klondike; and they were in this respect indirectly responsible for Alaska becoming a possession of the United States. For had it not been for the abundance of sea otters on the islands and mainland coasts, the Russians would most likely never have become established in that part of America, and Alaska would have become a British possession along with Canada.

These animals were at one time one of the most abundant of all commercially important wild animals. Yet to-day they are the rarest and most priceless. And the page of modern man's history for which they were responsible is one of the least known.

Despite the little-known fact that Alaska was almost certainly the landing place of the very first humans to migrate to the New World, history does not begin there until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the

first Russian explorers made their way across Bering Sea. And a complete truthful history of the country has not, and probably never will be, written.

The Aleutian Islands adjoining the mainland of the American continent were apparently first discovered in the early winter of 1745 by one Michael Nevodtsikof, a native of Tobolsk. Before 1760 word had spread through Siberia and back into Russia of the great abundance of valuable furs which were to be had so easily in this newly discovered land. Ships had returned with "above 5,000 sea-otter skins" and as many or more foxskins. Numerous expeditions were sent out in quest of these golden rewards—gained by barter, conquest, or as tribute exacted from the subjected natives.

It was necessary for these venturesome expeditionists first to make their way across the entire breadth of Russia and Siberia; then to build their ships, with a dearth of tools, from the trees that lined the rivers of Kamchatka; and then blindly to pilot those ships across the stormy treacherous expanse of Bering Sea by sailing or "being rowed by their own crews." Truly, it was a full-fledged brand of empire building, fraught by many more hazards and adventures than the first covered-wagon caravans that made such colorful history in the gloriously wild and woolly days of our own old West. Needless to say, many of these home-made vessels that

hove out to sea, bound eastward across Bering Sea, never returned or were heard of afterward.

Settlements were established, trading companies were organized; further exploration of the mainland coast was pushed forward; the natives were brought into a state of submission through cruel and high-handed tactics; and the sea-otter industry was rapidly developed on a grand scale.

Most of the sea-otter pelts were transported to China, where they were in the greatest demand. The Chinese would pay (in 1787) from eighty to one hundred and forty rubles (a ruble being approximately one dollar) for pelts with a sale value of no more than thirty rubles in more distant Moscow.

About the time that the sea-otter hunting trade began to assume the proportions of a really substantial frontier industry, however, the Russian priests gained a strong political control of the country. They quickly assumed an almost uncanny domination of the natives, and there began one of the most despotic and most commercialized religious dictatorships in the history of our continent. The rule of the Spanish Conquistadores was not more tyrannical than that of these early Russian rulers of Alaska.

A large part of the furs at one time passed through the hands of the priests. The natives paid for everything

with sea otter and fox skins. Vast numbers of pelts were turned over merely for the privilege of having churches erected in their villages; in payment for the cheap and gaudy colored prints and other religious decorations imported from Russia to hang on the walls; for marriages, christenings, special blessings, and what not. In addition to this a highly profitable barter was carried on.

As evidence of the grand scale on which this was once enacted, it is estimated that the original little plain frame church at Belkofski, the old village near King Cove, was paid for with at least one hundred thousand dollars' worth of sea-otter skins.

Not satisfied, however, with ordinary methods of gaining the precious pelts, the ecclesiasticals even went to the extreme of instigating what they termed an "Easter Hunt," during which all of the sea otters taken were delivered to the Church. This hunt lasted a whole week. Every male person who was old enough and able to hunt was religiously compelled to spend the entire time at sea in quest of otters. At the end of the period all the hunters would return to the village and present their total catch to the priest. The belief was that in accordance with the number which each hunter brought in from this Easter Hunt, so would he be blessed in proportionate success throughout the rest of the season.

I was told of one particular occasion at Belkofski

when there was such a storm raging on the first day of the scheduled hunt that none of the hunters would venture to sea in their hunting bidarkas or Aleut skin canoes which resemble the well known Eskimo kayak. The priest raved and threatened them, but still they would not go. At last he ordered each little craft to be brought into the church, and its bow was sprinkled with holy water. After this the hunters went forth through the breakers that tumbled and burst on the beach—and no more time was lost!

The hunting of sea otters was a hazardous pursuit. As the animals spent practically the whole of their lives at sea, frequenting the large kelp patches and the dangerous areas of reefs and tiny rocky islands of which there is an unholy abundance in those parts, they were generally hunted in bidarkas.

During the summer months, when the weather was less stormy, the otters would generally frequent the open sea, often going as far as a hundred miles offshore. At these times the hunters would go out in numbers. They would spread out in a line and paddle their bidarkas in straight-front formation until an otter or otters were sighted. Then the chase began. The object was to tire the creature by causing it to dive immediately it came to the surface and gradually to close in upon it in a decreasing circle. When it was at last compelled to come

to the surface for air within range, every hunter who was close enough would hurl his harpoon or spear at it. Sometimes the animal would be struck by several spears, for the natives were exceedingly expert; but the one who lodged his weapon nearest to the animal's head secured the prize.

As the pelt of the sea otter was "prime" at all seasons of the year, it could be hunted throughout the summer. This fact, and certain other unusual peculiarities, contributed largely to the early extermination of the species once the hunting developed into such a profitable and pretentious industry.

In the winter and during the very stormy periods the sea otters would come in close to the coast to rest in the shelter of small islands, reefs, or large areas of floating kelp.

Certain small coves or little bays were favorite hunting places during stormy periods. The otters would come into them and dive about sportively at play or lie asleep on their backs in the water. Meshed nets were placed in such places, suspended in the water with floats along one edge and weights on the bottom, much in the fashion of gill nets set for salmon. In their dives the sea otters would become entangled in these nets and drown.

Hunters also stationed themselves with their bidarkas near the entrances of these coves, watching for the ani-

mals to come in. Sometimes they could be harpooned as they entered, but generally the hunter had to wait until they were well into the place, when he would slip his bidarka quietly into the water and paddle swiftly out after the prize. And it was seldom that the animal escaped, so skillful were the hunters.

In later years, when sea-otter hunting had become a more highly commercialized occupation, large numbers of hired native hunters and their bidarkas were taken out to the hunting grounds on sailing schooners. Thus the hunters could live on the ships, making them their base and not having to return to the village for food and rest. The method of hunting remained very much the same from the time of the first contact with the Russians until the end of sea-otter hunting.

That it took an experienced native hunter to capture these animals can be readily understood. To maneuver a skin canoe and at the same time to be able to throw a harpoon with enough speed and accuracy to implant it in one of the darting, diving creatures was a feat of no small skill.

The rapid increase in the value of sea-otter pelts and the advent of more and more fortune seekers in the field soon wiped out the species. As early as 1895 a well equipped vessel might get no more than fifty skins as an entire season's catch. Contributing to this state of affairs

was an extreme unprolificness on the part of the animals. Usually but one young is born, and it stays with the mother for an unusual length of time, not leaving her until it takes a monogamous mate for itself. I was told that the full growth of a sea otter requires "about long time same as boy become man"—which would mean among those people around fifteen years.

Probably no other animal shows a greater interest and affection for its offspring than the mother sea otter. Most of the native hunters that I talked to commented particularly upon this fact. She seems to take the greatest delight in fondling, playing with and caring for her youngster. For hours at a time she will lie on her back in the water with her pup clasped between her forefeet and sing to it with a crooning, purring sound. At the same time she will affectionately caress it, and it is in this position that she generally sleeps.

"She never leave young one," old Demetri told me. "Somebody kill baby—she cry all time—come back just die same place—nobody shoot—just cry till she die."

The sea otter in general appearance looks very much like a cross between an ordinary seal and a land otter. They are not large animals—a full-grown one averaging only about four feet in length, including a twelve-inch tail—and they weigh around eighty pounds. The

forefeet are small, and the hind part of the body ends abruptly in flat oar-like feet or flippers.

Their fur, now priceless because of the extreme scarcity of the animals, is a deep rich liver-brown color, frosted with long silver-tipped hairs. Underneath is a preponderance of beautiful soft woolly fur of a lighter brown hue, which gives the pelt its value.

But like the great herds of buffalo that once roamed our Western plains, the sea otters are gone. The old-time hunters have nearly all passed away, and the sea otter is almost as much of a mystery to the younger generation as it is to the traveler in those parts who would seek to learn something about them. Even the frail little sea-lion skin bidarkas are now seldom to be seen on the beach in front of the villages. Even the churches are run down, unpainted, and weeds have overgrown their little graveyards where lie those who once ruled Russian America; and broken and faded is the despotic and lucrative rule of the Russian priests on that stormy Alaskan coast.

As I sat and bit by bit pieced together the fascinating tale that fell in crude abbreviated comments from the drooping wrinkled lips of smoky-eyed old Demetri, I could not help but marvel at the dangerous life which he had led; and at the even more adventurous lives of his ancestors. And by the time the hides of my herd of

grizzlies were all "leaned," salted, and packed away, I felt that I was just beginning to enter into the storeroom of treasure lore which was contained in the dusty thoughts and knowledge of this fine old hunter of the stormy seas.

But I had stormy adventures of my own not far ahead.

CHAPTER III

LAND OF STORMS AND TOJAS

AT LAST we were ready to start out in our little schooner. But being ready to start does not always mean going anywhere on that part of the earth.

During the night a storm sprang up from the south, and when I stepped out of the door of my shack I was hit in the face by a volley of wind-driven sleet that stung like sand in a desert storm. It was black as blindness. The breakers were thundering and booming on the beach in front of the village. I made my way to the corner of the shack and, peeking around it, saw a light in Captain Madsen's place. But I did not have to wait until I went over there to know that we would not start out that morning.

Nor did we start the second morning, nor the one that followed. It was almost a week before the wind hauled round to the north again. But my time was not

lost. There was wonderful duck and goose shooting in the lagoon. I even shot them from my very doorway, as they flew low over the village to light in the calm lagoon. There were hundreds of them—sometimes thousands. There were big barbed emperor geese, that strode with stately step along the shore; fat king eiders, with their drab brown mates; Steller's eiders, most beautiful of all the ducks; old squaws, with their long trailing tails; high-crowned mergansers; parrot-faced puffins; blue harlequins, and many more. In a whirring, quacking, screeching parade they came. Nowhere on the seven seas is there a larger or more interesting variety of sea birds than in that district in winter.

At last, however, we were on our way. Our plans were to make Unimak Island, the first and largest of the Aleutians, our first stop; then go through the Isanotski Strait around the extreme end of the continent and up the Bering Sea side to Morzhovoi Village. From there we would work our way back along the coast to our original starting point, stopping in nearly all of the bays and coves to buy the furs which the natives had already caught. But all this was conditioned on one thing—the weather. I had already learned that anyone who travels by boat on that stormiest part of the earth is a slave to the whim of wind and sea.

It was a rough trip, but finally we made into a small

cove on the east shore of Unimak, almost in the shadow of smoking Shishaldin volcano, and the anchor was dropped. After a careful inspection to see that everything aboard our little ship was as it should be, we rowed ashore in the lifeboat.

There was but a single habitation in the cove—the big sod-covered barrabara of a white trapper and his halfbreed family; and as white visitors rarely stopped there, we were welcomed by old Pete Johnson with almost pitiable enthusiasm.

That night we were entertained with accordion solos by Pete's married son who lived with him. The instrument had been ordered from a mail-order-house catalogue, and he had learned to play it by sitting before an antiquated phonograph and following the recorded pieces over and over again until he knew them by heart. And the boy could play with the energy of a storm at sea.

The next morning we were up before daybreak. But when I stepped outside the low sod-banked entrance of the underground house the wind almost blew me off my feet. Captain Madsen was close behind me. He took one peek at the weather, exclaimed: "No Morzhovoi Village to-day!" and ducked back inside.

For three days our little schooner rode the teeth of the turmoil that rolled in to burst in thunderous spray on

the beach. Only her mast top could be seen when she sank in the deep green troughs, and on their crests she perched like an eagle on a rocky ridge. Our one hope was that the anchor rope would not be chewed in two by the incessant strain and let her drift in to be pounded to bits on the beach. But she rode out the storm in an admirable fashion; and we were at last on our way again toward Isanotski Strait and the Bering Sea.

It was late afternoon that our boat was brought safely into the big bay and anchored just off the jumble of sod-covered barrabaras of Morzhovoi Village. They looked more like a big clutter of aged Dakota haystacks, partly covered with snow, than the abodes of human beings, but as we rowed toward shore, natives began to pop out of their cave-like entrances and wander down to meet us.

They had been having a party in the village. Every inhabitant, from half-grown children to their grandparents, was cockeyed drunk on sourdough, the favorite home-made brew of that part of the world. It is made of flour, water, sugar, and raisins, prunes, potato peelings, or anything else that is handy, and when properly fermented it makes a most dynamic concoction. They drink the greenish colored fluid and then eat the doughy mush which settles to the bottom, and it is a question which is the more potent.

That night, for our particular benefit, they staged a dance in the chief's big barrabara. It was a dirty place, and reeked of the vinegary odors of sourdough. A very much dilapidated phonograph of an antiquated design furnished the music, if music is the right term for it, and they hopped and swung about in Swedish waltzes and other dances, which had been taught them by visiting whalers and sealers, until the air of the room was unbearable to breathe.

I attended a similar, though more elaborate, affair in another native village farther up the coast, where the portly spouse and daughter of the local chief came garbed in party dresses that caused me to stare in uncontrolled amazement. They were of the genuine "mutton-chop" style such as the well dressed ladies of our own family circles wore in the elegant 'eighties! They were much soiled and wrinkled from the many years which they had been crammed in some sealskin bag or duffel box, since some well meaning Ladies' Aid or Missionary Society, possibly back in Ohio or Pennsylvania, had sent them to the "poor destitute natives in the Arctic." Their high collars were pinned together at the top, though the problem of putting a 16-size garment on a 40-size tummy was ludicrously solved by the use of heavy white cord which crisscrossed back and forth across the gap-

ing opening in the front that displayed a four-inch strip of the wearer's dirty underwear.

Our host, during the stay at Morzhovoi, was the only white man who made the village his home. He was an eccentric old Norwegian who had "jumped ship" from a sealing schooner that had stopped there about twenty-five years before, married the chief's sister, and had a large family of boys now old enough to support the family on the foxes that they caught during the winter. His wife was an old lady, brown and wrinkled as a walrus, who showed the unmistakable equal portions of Russian and Aleut blood that ran in her veins. Possibly the blood of some eminent Russian voyager or emissary to the country was responsible for the almost stately bearing that sometimes peeked through her native personality—possibly it may have been one of the exiled political prisoners who had been condemned to a penal colony in this farthest outpost of the Czar's possessions. Her brother, however, was Aleut native to the core.

Pete Toggerson's Wife, as the lady was locally known, always wore a frayed black silk kerchief tied tightly around her Slavic brown face; and she went silently about her work with a home-made cigarette invariably dangling from her lower lip. From morning to night it hung there, more as a decoration than an indulgence. She was a devout Russian Greek Catholic, and had her

little corner in the bedroom with its old-gold decorated ikon and other religious fixtures, before which she crossed herself and prayed regularly and devotedly. Of the two, her asthmatic Norwegian mate was probably the greater heathen.

The morning after our arrival, while Captain Madsen bartered for the bulging bundles of fiery red foxskins that had already been collected, I went out after caribou with two of our host's eldest sons. A raw wind was whipping down across Bering Sea from the Arctic as we plodded back across the tundra toward the low bald hills.

The thing which impressed me most strongly about this whole country was its terrible bleakness—naked volcanoes rising on every horizon, a sea that was seldom calm, and a terrain of swampy tundra or blizzard-swept desolation. As I followed close behind those two raw-boned sons of the Arctic I marveled at how humans or wild beasts could be content to tolerate it as a permanent home.

We had not been gone from the village more than half an hour when a band of about fifteen caribou were seen grazing on the side of a low rolling hill in the tundra. The boys, however, did not seem to be particularly thrilled or even interested.

"Pretty soon, *pleanty* deer!" they grinned wisely.

Not long afterward we reached the crest of another low bald ridge, and in a wide flat tundra area beyond was a sight I shall never forget. More than a thousand caribou were spread out before us like grazing domestic cattle on a Texas range. And this was less than three miles from the big village—one of nature's own butcher shops for some of God's frozen children.

There was really no stalking necessary. We kept right on going. Approaching to within a hundred yards of the herd, they began to move off to one side or the other. Some ran a short way off, to stop and stand staring suspiciously at us, while others moved reluctantly along, still continuing their grazing on the moss which they rooted or dug out of the thin covering of snow.

"Big one!" at length exclaimed one of the boys in a whisper as he stopped to point out a bull with tremendous spread of antlers.

We walked up to within about a hundred yards of the big monarch of the herd.

"You shoot um this far?" I was asked as the boys stopped.

Sitting down on a nigger-head in the tundra, I brought my gun into position with a rest on my knees to steady my aim. Waiting until I got an open shot, with no other animals in the way, I fired. At the report

of the gun every caribou in the herd jumped out of its tracks and made a short run. The big bull, however, reared up and fell over on his side. And as we hurried over to view the prize, the rest of the herd stood staring inquisitively at us. It was an unexciting sort of hunting; but the old tundra monarch was a prize for my museum group.

The following day Captain Madsen and I got aboard our little schooner and started working our way back toward home. We made numerous stops. In some of the bays there would be several families, tucked away in their little trapping barrabaras, existing, in their moldy underground hovels, more like animals than human beings.

The boundaries of their trapping grounds are very definitely defined and rigidly respected. They are inherited from generation to generation, and to encroach upon another man's territory is a most serious offence, sometimes resulting in murder.

The occupants of these smelly winter hovels always seemed quite happy and contented with their lot in life; and they always welcomed us with a hospitality unlimited by circumstances or conventionality. A meal was the first thing that they would prepare for us, no matter what time of day or night we arrived; and they

invariably invited us to stay all night with them. Where we would have slept, in view of their single room and one or two bunks, is still a question in my mind; but it is beyond doubt that we would have carried away with us a horde of bothersome little gray-backed parasitic visitors.

In my brief experience with these Aleuts I had already come to know what Vineamenoff, the first Russian priest to live among them and one of the great authorities on the subject, meant when he wrote: "The Aleuts are an unclean people." The more that I saw and learned about them, the more amazed I became that they should ever have had any inclination toward or knowledge of the art of human mummification, and the more doubtful I became of the foundation for the stories which I had heard of the existence of those embalmed ancients.

One of the stops which we planned to make on our way home was at Thin Point, at the entrance to Morofski or Cold Bay. In back of this is a tall cone-shaped volcano called Frosty Peak.

"There are some whopping big bears that stay up on the sides of that old volcano," Captain Madsen had said, and it was to get one of these huge grizzlies that we planned to stop.

It had been snowing hard and continuously. There

was a foot of snow on the ground when we landed at Thin Point, and the thermometer had slipped down almost to zero.

Bright and early on the morning after our arrival at Thin Point Smith's big barrabara, we started back toward the snow-shrouded volcano that towered its cone-shaped summit into the cold gray clouds. There were four of us, including two of T. P.'s boys. One of the lads had recently seen the tracks of what he claimed was a "holy whopper" of a bear a few days before, while he was out running his fox traps.

We went to the creek where the tracks had been seen, and to our surprise soon came on the trail of a bear which was unquestionably a monster animal.

"That's him!" exclaimed the boy. "Same one!"

"Made last night or this morning," said Captain Madsen as he examined the imprints in the snow.

Although it was then late in November, and despite the unusually deep snow and cold weather, there were still a number of salmon in the stream. They could be seen occasionally in the open places along the stream where the current was swift enough to keep the ice from freezing. And this fact was keeping a few of the bears out of their winter sleeping dens. It is not the cold that sends these animals into hibernation, but the cutting off of their food supply, and they generally stay out

as long as sufficient salmon are to be found to satisfy their appetites.

Following the tracks of the big fellow up the stream we saw a number of places where he had broken large areas of the ice to get the almost lifeless salmon. On the banks were the mute evidences of the big beast's last feasts before retiring to his den for the long sleep.

Old Frosty Peak rises quite abruptly from the flat tundra country, and the stream cuts down through a steep canyon in its side. But just before the canyon was reached the tracks we were following led off to one side and into a large thick growth of alders that extended up from the base of the volcano. A careful examination with our binoculars assured us that the big bear's tracks did not leave this alder thicket. He was certainly in there!

Within a short time one of the natives spotted him lying down in the snow; and as we moved down opposite the spot he stood up, looking down at us. We could not see him any too plainly, owing to the thick branches, but he looked as big as a load of hay to me.

I told the others that I wanted to get him alone, and that no matter what happened they were not to shoot unless I asked for help. At my first shot he bolted pell-mell through the alders along the hillside. At my second shot he wheeled abruptly around to bite at the

spot where the bullet had hit him. And at the third shot he charged straight for us! I emptied my gun at him. Still he kept coming—looking bigger and more ferocious at every step as he came plunging down through the alders.

"Stop him!" I yelled unconsciously, as I hurriedly reloaded my gun.

Four of us blazed away, now walking backward as we fired. Not once did he go down. Not another time did he show any indication that the bullets had hit him.

"Stop him!" I heard Captain Madsen yell, as the monster creature neared the lower edge of the alders and in a few moments would come thundering out upon us.

Then down he went! One of the shots had struck a vital spot and he collapsed completely, his nose burying itself in the snow, and the great body coming to rest with all four feet spread out underneath him.

He dropped less than fifty yards from us, though he had been approximately two hundred yards away when I fired the first shot.

Very shortly we went up to where he lay. If he was not the great-granddaddy of all the great grizzlies on the Alaska Peninsula, he must have been that big bear's elder brother. He was a monster indeed!

We found upon skinning him the next day that he had been hit twelve times by our bullets. Two of these

shots had struck him in the head—one quite squarely in the mouth, and the other, the fatal one, cutting a furrow in the dome of his skull and a part of it entering the brain.

We estimated his live weight at approximately sixteen hundred pounds; and his pelt, ultimately measured by the taxidermist when it was tanned and made up, was eleven feet four inches in length by ten feet six inches spread between the tips of his front claws.

I had a wonderful feeling of exultation as we started back toward King Cove. Somehow, I didn't seem to care what the future held in store for me, after the last of my meager funds would be gone. For no matter what might happen now, I had met a great test in my young life and come through with flying colors. Of course, fate had been kind to me, and Arctic hospitality had played a very important part. Nor was it merely the magnificent specimens that I had got that gave me the greatest satisfaction. I had done the thing I wanted most to do, in the face of great handicaps and in a frontier country exceedingly hard-boiled toward all intruders.

But things had been coming my way far too well. I was due for a disastrous upset. It came quite suddenly, quite unexpectedly, and in a thoroughly unpleasant manner, though even out of that disaster I reaped a valuable reward.

Captain Madsen and I set out from our home port on another fur-collecting voyage along the coast. The wind was whipping down from the north with a blizzard in its teeth. It was cold. The treacherous north Pacific was rough.

"We're goin' to catch hell when we cross Morofski Bay," predicted the skipper as our little schooner dived into the toppling waves.

We did. Almost before I knew it, after we had passed the high rocky cape which marks the northern portal of the big bay, we were in a turmoil of wind and sea that tossed our little boat about almost helplessly. The whitecaps broke clear over us. Then, quite suddenly, the engine stopped; and just in the nick of time Captain Madsen got up the sail and we hauled around and started swinging along before the gale.

I took the wheel while Madsen ducked down below deck in a feverish effort to get the engine going again.

We wheeled along, swinging and sliding before the churning waves that rolled up mountain high behind us. The wind had swung down to the southwest, and we were right in the teeth of it. One big whitecap caught the boat almost broadside before I could haul it around, and I barely escaped being washed overboard by the tons of water that broke over us.

Captain Madsen popped up from the little engine room and took the wheel himself.

A shroud of thick snow and sleet settled upon us and hid the rocky coast line from view. Time lost its element. On we raced.

"We'll try to tack into King Cove Bay," Captain Madsen yelled.

The next thing I knew I was clutching the wheel and he was hauling frantically on the sail rope in an effort to throw the boom over to the opposite side.

Up ahead I could barely see ominous cliffs of white spray that shot up into the snow-filled air and settled with a warning thunder. It was the reef just off the cape at the far side of King Cove Bay.

The boat was half around when a great wave broke over it. It landed in the sail, and the boom lunged across the deck. There was the sickening sound of splintering wood.

When the tons of icy water which had burst over us had cleared we were both still clinging to the boat; but our sail was ripped in two, and we were helplessly drifting into a seething hell of rocks and breakers.

In my younger days I had dreamed of being shipwrecked on a bleak and far-off coast. Suddenly I remembered those foolish dreams—and wished heartily that I had never entertained them in my thoughts.

Somehow we managed to get into the dory which we were towing and which already had been badly damaged by being pounded against the schooner.

Dismay gripped me as I realized that Madsen was heading the little open boat right in toward the reef—though I did not realize at the time how hopeless it would have been to attempt to row *against* that wind and sea.

A great wave caught us. We raced along on its churning crest into the white turmoil. The boat turned on its side, and we were engulfed in the roaring breakers. I clutched the side of the boat with all the strength I possessed and had a feeling of being rushed along at a terrific rate of speed toward a disaster which it seemed would mark the ultimate end of my adventurous career.

But at last my head popped above the water. I gasped for air. The icy water shocked my body with the effect of a powerful electric current. I looked for Madsen. He was holding onto the other side of the boat. I was faintly aware that he was smiling. I remember that at the moment it made me angry—for to my mind this was no time to smile!

Then my knees struck a rock, and I felt the impact of the boat grind on something solid; and coming to my senses I realized that we were on the shore of the rocky cape. Half in a stupor I crawled and stumbled up above

the reach of the waves and slumped down on a wet, slimy ledge.

"Well," said Captain Madsen, with a sort of wry grin on his face, "that's at least something to write home about."

We waited on the slimy rocks until the little schooner was driven through the openings in the reef through which we had come, so that we might get block and tackle and haul it up tight against the rocks to avoid its being pounded to pieces.

Late that night we staggered into the village at the head of the bay—about as miserable a pair as one could hope to find.

But it was the sequel which was really disastrous for me. Before morning my feet began to throb and pain. They were frozen. They swelled up like seal pokes filled with oil, turned gangrenous blue and green and black. It was five hundred miles to the nearest medical aid. I suffered exceedingly. Captain Madsen insisted that I let him cut off several of my toes with a hunting knife, though, as we had no anesthetic, I did not have the courage to consent to the operation. But once again fate was kind to me, and eventually, after many painful days of periodic applications of very hot water containing bichloride of mercury and massagings that

caused me to verge on fainting from the pain, my feet began to return to normalcy.

This experience taught me a very valuable lesson. My feet would not have been frozen had I been wearing the loose native skin mukluks instead of my tight leather boots. Since then I always adopt the clothing of the country in which I am sojourning as quickly as possible.

One day old Demetri brought me the two freshly skinned pelts of big white Arctic hares he had sent his young son out to catch. He tied a string around the necks of the cased hides and cut off the part to which the big ears were attached. Then he told me to put on a pair of light woollen socks, over which the rabbitskins were pulled and shaped to my feet. Over this I placed another pair of woollen socks and with heavy lumbermen's socks and native mukluks or fur boots over all of this my feet were comfortably protected from the cold. The body heat caused the pelts to dry to the shape of my feet, and at night I would remove both pairs of light woollen socks with the skins between so that they would not be torn.

The enforced leisure which resulted from my frozen feet afforded me an opportunity to cultivate further the friendship and confidence of old Demetri, as well as some of the other older natives in the village, and of learning things which otherwise I might never have

known. And now that my collecting of the giant Kodiak grizzlies was most satisfactorily completed I turned my attention to learning everything possible about the mysterious mummies of the remote Islands of the Four Mountains in the stormy Aleutians.

According to hoary and rather vague traditions, I learned bit by bit that the bodies of famous *tojas* or whale hunters and illustrious chieftains were supposed to have been mummified by the ancient Aleuts. Dressed in all their primitive finery, they were wrapped in soft tanned skins of pup seals and sea otters and laid away in secret burial caves. The greatest subordinate hunters of their village were sometimes also put to death, mummified, and placed in the same cave with their harpoons and other weapons, in order that they might serve as grave-escort bodyguards for their leader in the spirit world; and the best seamstresses were similarly sent along with all the paraphernalia necessary to attend to household wants. As to the amount of truth in these traditions, however, I had of course no means of judging.

At night, even to this day, the spirits of the deceased are supposed to leave their hard dried bodies and fly out to sea to pursue the ponderous whale in phantom thrilling chase; and then return to dance and feast around

the entrance of the cave until daylight sends them back to rest in their mummified mortal forms.

Time and again I was sternly warned of the occult powers which still guarded these sacred mummies from molestation.

"Long time nobody live Islands Four Mountains," I was warned. "Nobody go. Somebody go look—bad luck *all* time. Somebody touch, take away—die quick! You no go that place!"

The story fascinated me. Here was a quest that not only had a great scientific value in its accomplishment, but was savored with adventurous allurements; and I determined that some day, if the mummies really existed, I was going to put to a test the ominous warnings of these wrinkled old patriarchs of this stormiest of all parts of the earth and sail away from the Islands of the Four Mountains with some of their sacred tojas.

The weeks passed. So did my dwindling little bank roll. But the recovery of my feet was something to be thankful for, in spite of the loss of such trivial things as toe nails and chunks of hide, and an acute sensitiveness to the cold.

Christmas approached, and my spirits sank again. Then, in the cold gray dawn of December 24th, the *Dirty Dora* came poking her storm-scarred prow into

the bay. A box of holiday remembrances from my mother made life look a little brighter.

I had vaguely hoped that a check might be among my mail from the magazine editor to whom I had written, for the articles which were now ready to be sent. But there was neither check nor letter from that or any other editor. The manuscripts, however, were mailed; and I shipped my trophies also, excepting the pelt of the giant granddaddy grizzly, charges collect to the museum.

The *Dora* brought tales and rumors of the Great War. Among these were reports of the United States' impending entry into the conflict which was rapidly setting fire to the whole world; and disconcerting predictions that Japan was on the verge of joining forces with Germany and loosing a yellow peril that would surge across the Pacific to invade the United States.

"I'm tellin' you," the grizzled skipper of the *Dirty Dora* snarled in words that I shall never forget, "one Jap warship could come up here and take the whole Territory of Alaska without hardly firin' a shot!" And he was correct in the statement. They could even to-day.

The following month, when the little mail boat was a week to ten days overdue, we came to the conclusion that the rumors had been well founded, particularly the one predicting the conquest of Alaska by the Japa-

nese. Of course, we had no contact whatever with the outside world, but we were certain in our own deductions that a Japanese man-of-war had steamed to the northeast corner of the Pacific—and the poor little *Dirty Dora* had fallen a victim!

But at last the little ship rounded Bold Cape, and our apprehensions burst like bubbles.

In my mail I found a letter from the magazine. I was almost afraid to open it. But before the typewritten sheet was unfolded I glimpsed the check inside. Two hundred dollars! It seemed like a fortune.

When the *Dora* returned from Unalaska I boarded her for Seward. Nor did I travel this time as a work-a-way galley slave, but as a passenger. At Captain Madsen's suggestion I had invested my entire capital in red foxskins, purchased from the natives at four dollars apiece. In fact, I had to turn in two of the pelts to the purser, at twelve-fifty each, to pay for my passage. The rest were sold in Seward for twenty to twenty-five dollars each, on the profits of which I lived comfortably, if not elaborately, until time to go bear hunting at the head of Cook Inlet in the spring.

That first winter which I spent in Alaska was one of my most valuable experiences. During a large part of it I was compelled to "live off the country." My finances were such that when I was not traveling with Captain

Madsen I had to subsist on practically a straight meat diet. I had caribou three times a day, in one form or another, with beans or hot cakes as an occasional luxury. Even when traveling on the schooner, meat provided most of our fare. Yet at the end of that winter I weighed at least fifteen pounds more than I had ever weighed before or since and about thirty pounds more than I do at the present time.

During the summer I replenished my funds by working on the United States government railroad that was being built from Seward to Fairbanks; and in the early winter, after a short moose hunt, I returned to the States to enlist in the aviation section of the army. But I left Alaska with a determination to return as soon as the opportunity could be created.

CHAPTER IV

MY MURDEROUS MAN FRIDAY

THE lure of the frontier, like a disease to those who have known it, took me back to Alaska shortly after the termination of the war. This time the excuse was gold—the virgin gold that lies hidden in the peaceful Alaskan valleys and rugged peaks; the golden god of the northland that has lured like a phantom pied piper so many adventurous souls.

But after a summer of struggling through the mosquito- and fly-infested swamps of the Susitna Valley and over the rocky ridges of the Talkeetna mountains with a long string of pack horses; living among the cold barren peaks; spending weeks of long days climbing the cliffs and chasms with prospector's pick and dynamite; and fist fights and intrigue on the part of some of my associates; I came to the conclusion that I was more

deeply interested in ancient Aleut mummies and how grizzly bears spend their evenings during the long winter hibernation, than I was in getting a yellow fortune from the reluctant rocks.

With all of its gambling excitement, brawls and conspiracy, this trip was more like the smell of strong liquor to a drunkard than actual indulgence. It fired my imagination and my desire to wander again far out in that bleak and desolate land of storms and volcanoes, tundra and treacherous reefs along the northernmost margin of the Pacific. I dreamed of spending a winter frozen-in in an Eskimo village on the icebound shores of the Bering Sea, journeying on and on beyond the farthest outposts of civilization until the rest of the world was forgotten.

Two years later I left the shadows of the synthetic canyons of Manhattan and started on my third trip to Alaska. It was in the middle of December. I went alone. My first destination was an Eskimo village on the coast of the Bering Sea. It would be necessary for me to cross the blizzard-swept summit of the Alaska Range by dog team and carry with me five to six months' supplies, including a considerable quantity of heavy motion-picture equipment with which I hoped to make a record of the natives and wild creatures who make their homes on the ragged edges of that magical northland.

A NORTHLAND PORTRAIT GALLERY. *The Angutkok, or Medicine Man—dabbler in black magic, a despotic tribal power (upper left). A madonna of the Alaskan trading posts—a common type of Russian-Eskimo crossbreed (upper right). A native of the barren Diomedes—last outposts of humanity in the stormy waters that separate America and Asia (lower left). When an Eskimo girl and foreign clothing meet, this results—a maiden from the Bering Strait.*

Many of my friends told me I was plumb crazy to start on such a trip at such a season. Perhaps I was, in a way—and before I got through with the trip I was often quite sure of it. But the urge was too strong to wait until spring to get started.

At Seward, Alaska, the northern terminus of mid-winter commercial transportation on the Pacific, I boarded the mail boat going westward. It was not the picturesque old *Dirty Dora,* but a trim little modernist known as the *Starr,* which had taken her run; nor was I destined to peel potatoes as a work-a-way in a cock-roach-infested galley under the curses of a Black Tom. In fact, there was but a single member of the old *Dora's* crew on the new boat. But somehow, as I stood on the stern of the little steamer and watched the last outpost of civilization slowly fade into the white grandeur of the Alaskan mountains, there was the same old indefinable feeling about it. I knew that ahead of me lay an inevitably hazardous trail, and five months or more of absolute isolation from the outside world. Yet I faced the prospect with a peculiar joy. I anticipated, in a general way, most of the circumstances into which I was plunging—though I could hardly have anticipated the murderous squawman dog-musher whom I was soon to have as a companion on the long hard trek through the snow-covered mountains and tundra.

En route to the place where I was to leave the *Starr* a stop was made at the native village of Kanatak. It was quite late on a night in early January best remembered for its impenetrable blackness, the knife-edged wind that whipped a steady downfall of snow across the little ship's deck, and the first views that I got of the gentleman who called himself Mr. X. B. Jones.

The anchor was dropped about a half mile offshore, and the signal sounded for the local white trader to come out to get his mail and freight. I had waited up, because my old friend Captain Charlie Madsen, with whom I had gone through so many vividly recollected experiences several years before, and farther to the westward, was now the white king of Kanatak, and I hoped to have a little chat with him.

After a while a lantern came bobbing out from the shore and two big dories eventually hove alongside. They were manned by Russian-Aleut natives, and in the stern of one sat Captain Madsen. He had not, of course, been aware of my presence on the *Starr*—and a great powwow was held while the dories were being loaded. Then he went ashore with them.

When the boats returned for a second load I was at the rail watching for him. He was not there, but in one of the boats I noticed a tall, gaunt, strikingly picturesque figure. In the dim glow of the ship's deck

lights it was difficult to distinguish definitely whether he was a white man or native. He was dressed in furs which even in the dim light appeared to be much the worse for long service, though his movements were unmistakably those of a white man.

As he swung onto the rope ladder and climbed up over the side into the light I saw a face made striking by a rawboned profile and small piercing eyes set deeply beneath black bushy brows. The skin was leathery brown and wrinkled into deep-etched patterns. I thought to myself: "Here's a fellow who must have seen the toughest and roughest ragged edges of the North!"

I watched him intently. His movements were like those of some animal of the wilds that had found itself suddenly in strangely civilized surroundings. Then I was given a little start when I heard him mention my name to the ship's purser.

Captain Madsen had sent him out to offer his services as a dog-team driver to take me across to the Bering Sea coast. After a very brief conversation, and in spite of the fact that he had a squaw whom he insisted on taking along, I hired him. Even if Captain Madsen had not sent him to me, I should have hired him on his outward appearances. He was hatchet-faced, tall, and lean as a staghound, and I quickly and correctly placed him as a far-strayed son of some Kentucky mountain clan. He im-

pressed me as being a wise individual—wise in the ways of the wilds—whose friendship would be as valuable as his enmity would be dangerous.

Just before we left the *Starr* in a blizzardly little uninhabited bay where the ship made a special stop to unload us and our dogs and paraphernalia for the long trek back through the mountains, I learned that my newly acquired Arctic Man Friday was, among other interesting things, an admitted murderer. And the circumstances gave me a good insight into the personalities of both of my companions.

It seemed that Anne, his squaw, had a habit of periodically running away to visit other men. Jones quite naturally did not like this. On one of these occasions he suspected her destination and went to look for her. In the shack of the suspect he found a wad of gum stuck onto the side of the man's bunk. Anne was an inveterate gum chewer, and the evidence was conclusive enough for Jones. He went and got his rifle, found the suspect in the center of the village, and shot him without further question. But Jones's reputation was such that not a person in that part of the country would risk appearing as a witness against him, and the case was reported to the nearest United States deputy marshal as "accidental death"—and the poor Swede was buried without inquiry or ceremony.

Our outfit was unloaded on the ice-covered beach of the little bay in the early morning of a crystal clear day. It was the most marvelously primitive spot I had ever seen—treeless; snow-clad peaks and volcanoes towering on three sides; devoid of any sign of human habitation; and nothing but the white of snow and the blue of sky and water as far as the eye could see.

"Ain't this country grand!" exclaimed Jones, as he juggled a fried egg on a thick slice of bread and gazed contentedly off into the cold mountains, as the Arctic sun was just dropping below the white horizon. " 'Specially in winter. Nobody to bother a feller. Lordy, I'm glad folks don't know how fine it is up here—they'd all come and ruin it."

I agreed with him. Never had I felt so far from the crowds of civilization; never before so gloriously the master of all I surveyed. My bridges were all burned behind me. I was reconciled to whatever might be ahead.

The days were enchanting—like living in a grotesque fairyland made of glistening diamond dust. The nights were bewitching, with their uncanny northern lights shooting a weird display of fiery varicolored ribbons far up over the drab silhouette of the mountains. Now and then the sharp wailing bark of a fox, probably impelled by the sight of our flickering fire, vibrated on the cold night air; and now and then the ice on the beach or the

small lagoon rent the stillness as it cracked and boomed. Truly, it was a magical world.

The trip across the mountains was a tortuous one, though I did get some marvelous films. Upward we wound our way, helping the dogs to drag the heavily loaded sled. I labored until my heavy woollens were wet with perspiration; then, when we stopped to rest or to make pictures, the cold wind chilled me almost instantly. We wound through palisades of snow and ice-covered rock; struggled up and skidded down steep hills, staggered over a summit swept clean by the terrific winds; and then at last descended to the tundra that stretched out to Bering Sea.

"These people are made of steel—they are inhuman!" I said to myself as I staggered into a tiny trapper's hovel on the "other side," where Jones had suggested we spend a few days trapping and making motion pictures. Not once had either Jones or Anne shown any outward signs of the grueling ordeal through which we had passed. Apparently it was just one more trip for them.

We spent about ten days in that dingy, smelly, sod-banked little shack; and a raging blizzard kept us stormbound inside the one small room most of the time. We hardly ventured outside. To have traveled would have been almost impossible; and it made me

shudder to think what might have happened if the blizzard had caught us up in the mountain pass.

On the second day of our imprisonment I suddenly realized that Anne was chewing gum. She had a large wad of it in her mouth and was making an unusual amount of noise over it. By the end of the day, which contained no let-up whatever in the loud smack, smack, smacking of the rubbery stuff, it had pretty well got on my nerves. The next morning I was awakened by the same sound. After three or four days of listening to it my nerves were about shot, and I was ready to plunge out into the blizzard and risk being frozen to death just to get away from the terrible noise. And I had also unpleasant apprehensions that she might make the serious mistake of sticking the pellet on the end of my bunk instead of her own—if she ever decided to take a rest.

On the third day, while Jones was just outside the door chopping alders for our dilapidated stove, I noticed that Anne was apparently making preparations to take a bath. She carried in pan after pan of snow and proceeded to melt it on the stove. She got out clean underwear and stockings and laid them on the Joneses' bunk, just a few feet from where I was lying on my own. Then she set a box in the center of the dirt floor to serve as a seat during the ceremony.

I was nonplussed. I had no notion of what etiquette

required on an occasion like this. Should I turn my face to the wall, or just be—well, nonchalant and light a cigarette!

She got out a towel and laid it on the box. Then she took out her gum and stuck it on the end of her own bunk. That, at least, was cheering. Then she lifted the steaming pan of water off the stove and put it on the floor beside the box.

"Mister Maclacken," she said suddenly, as the preparations were completed, "I goin' t' take a wash. You take walk?"

I got up, put on my fur mukluks and parka, and went out in the blizzard while Anne took her bath.

The high wind, heavy with snow and stinging with low temperature, made me gasp. I found Jones chopping alders. He looked like a snow man, so plastered with whiteness was his reindeer clothing. His face looked unusually black as it peered out from the big fringe of wolfskin that surrounded the hood of his parka, his drooping mustache and bushy eyebrows hoary with frost.

"A fellow's gotta get acclamized to this country!" he called out, brushing the snow from his parka hood with a fur mitten.

I thoroughly agreed with him.

Glancing around in search of the sled dogs I saw one

black nose and a beady pair of eyes shining out from under a canopy of drifted snow. Then another black nose appeared from the center of another snow-covered little hump. But they quickly replaced them in the furry warmth underneath and became invisible. Yes—a fellow certainly did have to become "acclamized," as Jones put it, to this country!

Eventually Anne came out of the tunnel-like entrance of our retreat to throw her bath water in the snow, and I went inside.

That afternoon, for lack of anything better to do, I got out my motion-picture camera to take it apart and wipe the gears clean of oil so that they would not freeze.

Jones was very much interested. He provided me with some rare amusement as well as difficulty in answering his questions about how motion pictures are made. He had never seen a movie show.

When at last I had got the camera reassembled, he heaved a sigh and ended by saying: "It sure 'nough comes in handy sometimes to know somethin' 'bout some things, but I never knew nothin' 'bout nothin'. All I kin do is talk 'bout somethin' I don' know nothin' 'bout."

I smiled and advised him that there were a lot of folks in this world that are in that same fix.

That night, after we had eaten our evening meal and

crawled into our sleeping bags in the two crude bunks that occupied a large part of the floor space, Jones became quite confidential. He expounded his philosophy of life. He was a lone wolf—and a lone wolf by temperament and choice.

"Jones all same caribou," piped in Anne: "all time wanna go far away—all time wanna be alone."

He had the feeling that he was eternally pitted against all the rest of the world, and the farther from civilization and other people he could get, the fewer battles he would have to fight. He hated civilization and everything that had any association with it worse than any other man I have known, and he loved the wilderness better.

Urged on by my questions and assurances of friendly interest, he told me in crudely eloquent terms of his mountain home in the back country of the Appalachians of Kentucky. He had been gone from there so long, and had endured such hardships in this North country, that it had become in his recollections a golden paradise to which, I sensed, he could never return. He told us of his log cabin birthplace up among the hills, and its big open fireplace where his mother would roast chickens, squirrels, and sometimes pig or venison. He talked about his brothers and sisters, and the homespun they made for clothing.

"Going back there some day?" I queried.

"No," was his quiet reply, and there was a note of pathos in his voice.

"Do they raise gum and oranges there?" questioned Anne quite seriously. To which Jones replied quite as seriously in the negative.

The conversation then drifted to "the people who lived here long before the first white men had come." I knew that Jones was a careful and keen observer of all things that had to do with the wilds; and I soon learned that he had noticed and dug into a number of the prehistoric village sites of which there are so many along the shores of Bering Sea.

"There mighta been lots smarter folks on this earth long before this outfit come—wasn't they?" he questioned.

I agreed that there mighta, but I was more interested in the Aleut mummies.

"Yes—I've heard tell 'bout them mummies," he replied. "The Aleuts call 'em asxínans or tojas. The tojas was their mighty hunters—meanin' mostly whale harpooners. They're supposed to have fixed 'em up in mummies or asxínans so's they could keep 'em from generation to generation."

I inquired if he had ever seen one.

"No!" he reiterated emphatically. "Nor I ain't ever

goin' to. They say them mummies is bewitched! I don't even like to talk about 'em. I've got troubles enough without goin' lookin' for a million years of native Medicine Men's curses. Not me!"

Later that same evening, while further expounding his unique philosophy of life, Jones made the startling statement that he'd "steal the only pair of false teeth that Jesus Christ had, if he'd get the chanct"; and yet he was genuinely afraid of the supposed curse which was the penalty for molesting any of the Aleut mummies!

Then Jones started to question me about what was going on outside. Most of these white Ragged Edgers, or persons who live on the last frontiers of the earth, are incessant readers of all the magazines and newspapers they can get their hands on. Some of them, even though they may not have visited a town of more than a dozen white inhabitants for years, are well informed upon human progress. But not Jones. And he was only mildly curious as to what the rest of the world was doing.

"Have they got any different kindsa things they never had before?" he asked.

I told him about a few of the new inventions which happened to come to my mind. After listening for a while with an occasional "Well!" or "Do tell!" he concluded this trend in the conversation with, "But all them new-fangled paraphergalias don't help me and

Anne none—and I reckon folks'd have lived jest as long if they never was invented." And that was a hard statement to refute.

At length the storm abated; we set out traps and caught a few red foxes. I got the pictures which I desired, and we continued on our way to the Bering Sea coast and the Eskimo village where I intended to spend the remainder of the winter.

On the trail we stopped at a trading post operated by Captain Cunningham, a picturesque old Scotchman. A number of Eskimos were gathered there, and they, with the three whites who were residents of the immediate section, had just ended a several days' search for an eccentric American who had apparently committed suicide under most amazing circumstances.

"He came up on one of the last cannery freight boats in the fall," explained Captain Cunningham, as we sat in front of the wonderful open fireplace in his comfortable dwelling. "He came to me and said he wanted to spend the winter here. I gave him the use of a shack down on the beach. Seemed like a nice chap—well educated, but just a little bit off in the head. I felt sorry for him and let him have all the grub and stuff he wanted, not knowing if he had a dollar to his name to pay for it.

"He was always talking about music—wishing that he had his violin so's he could play for me. One evening

he says to me: 'Cap—I got the secret by which the great Stradivarius made his priceless violins. Yep. I'm the only living person who knows it. I'm going to make one right here—and I'll play you music the likes of which you never heard.'

"I just thought it was one of his crazy ideas—thought maybe he had been a violin player in some orchestra or on the stage. But he got busy. He picked up bits of metal around the store and made his own tools. Then he started gathering pieces of wood—around in back of the storehouse, on the beach, everywhere. All day long he searched for these pieces of wood, examining each little piece with the greatest care, and only keeping those that looked right to him.

"Then he started building that fiddle. Night and day he worked—and finished it only about three weeks ago. He had brought some gut or whatever it is that you string on the thing to play it.

"Well, sir, I get to the States about once every two years, and I've heard a lot of music; but I'm telling you that he sure could play that violin. Not ragtime—real operas. I used to ask him to come up here in the house of an evening, where it was comfortable and warm, and play for me. Honestly, I never heard finer music.

" 'Ah!' he would say to me. 'It is the secret by which the great Stradivarius made his priceless violins. No one

else in all the world knows the secret. I have it, here in my head!' And he'd tap the top of his head as he spoke.

"Oscar, here, started kidding the poor fellow about this, telling him that he was going to steal the secret from him. Well, do you know, it got such a hold on the poor fellow that he was afraid to go to sleep at night for fear that Oscar would sneak into his shack and steal that secret. It was pathetic. He'd pile the table, boxes, and everything else in the shack against the door at night.

"Then he got the idea that he was going to die and that Oscar would cut open his head and take out his treasured secret. 'But he'll never find me!' he told me just the day before he disappeared. 'I'll go away out in the tundra before I die. He'll never find me and cut out the secret of the great Stradivarius.'

"I knew he was crazy—but what could I do? Then he disappeared. It was during the bad blizzard. He probably started out at night. We followed his tracks for a ways, but soon lost them. I rounded up all the Eskimos I could get, and we've searched the country for miles around.

"He left the violin with a little scribbled note saying it was a present for me. But I left it lying on the little table in his shack, thinking we might find the poor fellow and bring him back.

"Then—the other night when we came back from looking for him, I stopped at the shack just to look inside. The violin had completely fallen to pieces! Every one of the tiny little pieces of wood that he had so carefully cut and glued together, had fallen apart. There it lay in pieces, the gut strings all curled up at one end.

"I'm not overly superstitious, but I couldn't help but feel that there was some connection between the falling apart of that violin and the passing out of the life of the man who made it. At least, we didn't go out the next morning to look for him. Some mighty strange things happened up here in this country."

Not many days after that my little Arctic caravan pulled into the Eskimo village on the south portal of ice-locked Herendeen Bay, and there I proceeded to settle myself in as nearly native fashion as convenience and conventionality would permit. I had, on my first trip to this country, learned at the price of a pair of very badly frozen feet, to do and dress as the Eskimos do when in the Eskimo's country.

My stay in the Eskimo village was the realization of a long cherished dream. First, I set about hiring the entire village for my picture making. At length we settled upon a bargain. For one hundred and fifty dollars in cash they were to put on a complete series of old-time folklore dances, with all the trimmings; and after that

they were to turn over to me any or all of the special paraphernalia, or "paraphergalia," as Jones called it, which was used in the dances. They were also, one and all, to be at my beck and call for any other motion-picture scenes I might want to take around the village. The hundred and fifty dollars was to be paid to a committee immediately after the dances had been filmed.

Things progressed wonderfully until they received their money and undertook to divide it proportionately among the seventy or more individuals, young and old, who had participated. They knew that some of the older dancers, who had more important rôles in the affair, should receive more than the young children and the aged. Yet their bookkeeping and mathematics were not equal to the complicated problem. Nor would I risk even a suggestion, though for a while it looked very much as if there were to be a free-for-all battle over the proper division of the spoils. But at last everyone was satisfied, particularly myself—for I had secured not only an unusual film, but more than my money's face value in ceremonial drums, decorations, bows and arrows, and dance clothing.

I particularly enjoyed the days and evenings which I spent sitting in the native dwellings and swapping yarns with the old men. The Eskimos were much cleaner and more intelligent than their Aleut neighbors on the oppo-

site side of the peninsula and farther westward, yet in many respects they were more primitive, because of their slighter contact with white men. I entertained them with simple descriptions of the big village where I lived—its dog sleds that flew through the air like birds, and its dwellings that were high like mountains and occupied by ten times as many families as lived in Herendeen village. To all of which they would smile wisely, as much as to say: "Oh, what a liar!" Then, in return and every bit as seriously, they would tell me their ancient tales narrating the phenomenal exploits of their traditional ancestors—and it would be my turn to smile!

But spring came at last, and the ice broke up in Bering Sea. The birds came back from the South to their ancient rookeries, and the time arrived for me to leave for the big bear country toward the end of the Alaska Peninsula.

Captain Cunningham was engaged to transport me to my next jumping-off place in his twenty-six-foot gasoline boat. We carried X. B. Jones, Anne, and their dogs, to leave them in a primitively desolate big bay where they were to spend the summer as its only residents—unworried by any contact with the rest of the world.

On a subsequent trip to that same isolated part of the earth, I learned the sequel of the story of my brief stay. The Swede who had tried to steal the secret of the

Stradivarius from the eccentric violinist had been drowned while drunk in a small boat in a storm; Captain Cunningham had been lost at sea while making the same trip on which he had taken me and in the same boat; X. B. Jones had passed on into the Happy Hunting Grounds, while Anne was serving a twenty-year sentence in the penitentiary in the state of Washington for having strangled to death her tall, gaunt Kentuckian mate and partner of the bleak Alaskan trails. No doubt the spirit of poor old Jones is even now haunting the little forbidden paradise that centers around a log cabin far back in the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky, or roaming like a lone wolf along the bleak trails of the remote and stormy fastnesses of the Bering Sea coast.

CHAPTER V

HOBNOBBING WITH KODIAK GRIZZLIES

THE aggressive ferocity of the grizzly bear, particularly the Kodiak grizzly, which is the largest of them all, has been the subject of many glowing accounts. Yet from my own experiences, which have probably been about as extensive and complete as those of any other sportsman and most professional guides, I find myself in disagreement with the popular conception as portrayed in most writings of fact and fiction regarding these greatest of all present-day flesh-eating animals.

On this particular trip, from the time that the very first of them stuck their noses out of the snow-covered hibernation dens in the spring, until winter came to send them off into retirement again, I lived among the big shaggy creatures. Throughout the entire summer sea-

son I literally camped on their trails wherever night overtook me. As nearly as could be determined by an accurately kept diary, I saw nearly two hundred different Kodiak grizzlies during this one sojourn in their country. For the most part they were observed at close range—often a hundred feet, occasionally fifty feet, sometimes closer. And out of these experiences, supported by two other trips into the same country, as well as a consensus of the opinions of many local hunters whose judgment I respect, I have formulated some definite opinions regarding them.

During the first few trips that I made into the wild sections of western Canada, Alaska, etc., I had a very strong desire to kill game. It had been developed from the time that I had, as an eight-year-old boy, happened on my first live bear in its native haunts. But after two or three years of practically making my living from killing big and small game, in sections where game was very abundant, I gradually lost this taste for killing. I began, first, to watch the big creatures of the wilds with a confidence that I could kill them at any time that I wished—a sort of playing with them, much as a cat often toys with a mouse. I saw them do things which interested and amused me. Sometimes I was at a loss to arrive at a satisfactory explanation of the things they did, but gradually I began to feel that this peeking into

their intimate lives was even more fascinating than the mere shooting, just to gloat over their great horns or attractive hides.

Then, on this trip, when I went out primarily to make motion pictures, I found that it was not only a great deal more difficult than shooting with a gun, but more satisfying and far more exciting. I found that it took a greater knowledge of the habits of the creatures, and that it afforded a far greater opportunity really to peek behind the scenes. In short, it changed my whole attitude toward the animals themselves, as well as my interest in being in their country.

I chose what was believed to be the best big bear country on the Alaska Peninsula—and the entire continent—for the major part of my grizzly filming. This is the area along the Bering Sea side of the Alaska Range between Izembeck Bay and Nelson Lagoon—about sixty miles long and fifteen to twenty-five wide. It was uninhabited even by natives, except for two or three trappers during the winter months only; and it is one of the most inaccessible parts of the Peninsula.

It would be futile even to attempt to describe all the incidents of the two hundred and fifty or more encounters that I had with Kodiak grizzlies on this particular trip, though there was invariably something of interest in every one of them. Some of the bears, of course, were

encountered on several different occasions. We even had nicknames for a few: "The Murphy Family," "The O'Flaherty Family," "Grandpa Brownie," and so on. But the best I can do is to summarize and pick those experiences which seem most interesting and most significant —and to present them as faithfully as I can.

The fact that these greatest of flesh-eating animals are so very tiny, in comparison, when born may seem amazing. As I have previously stated, the cubs weigh only around nine ounces to a pound when they come into the world. This is about the size of bulldog puppies which are destined to develop into full-grown creatures weighing not more than sixty to seventy pounds—against sixteen hundred or more for the great Kodiak grizzly! But the explanation is very simple.

Nature has, of necessity, had to make this special provision, for the baby bears arrive several weeks before the mother leaves her winter hibernation quarters. When a bear goes into its den at the beginning of winter, it can get no food until it comes out the following spring. During this long period of semiconscious existence it must live upon the fat which has been stored up in its own body. This surplus fat is assimilated for the necessary nourishment by a special process which nature has devised for the purpose. The giving birth to one, two, three, or sometimes four offspring, naturally is a

serious drain upon the vitality and the stored-up supply of nourishment in the mother bear's body. To make this handicap as slight as possible the young are born very tiny.

In spite of this special provision which has been developed, the first bears to come out of the den in spring are invariably the mothers that have newly born cubs. The mother bear at that time is as lean and skinny as a half-starved dog, though the cubs are usually fat and roly-poly, about the size of a three-quarters grown English bulldog.

At first the family stays close to the home den, going through a short period of limbering-up exercises, mainly for the benefit of the mother. After that they start making little trips down into the lower country, where the ridges and valleys are free of snow; their den, of course, being a cave in the rocks or ground high up on some peak or volcano. The only foods that are available at this time are the tender shoots of new grass, weeds, roots, and an occasional ground squirrel which the mother will dig out. But before very long they will start down toward the Bering Sea beach, to await the first run of salmon coming into the streams. It is then that all their troubles and worries, so far as food is concerned, are over.

Before I had left the vicinity of Herendeen Bay for

my trip down the coast to the farther westward, after the break-up of the ice in Bering Sea, I was out searching for signs of the first bears to venture from their dens. As soon as the bare spots began to peek through the snow on the southerly ridges, I wandered regularly back through the hills to search every likely-looking spot with my binoculars.

The first bear was seen on May fourteenth. It was a mother and one lone cub; and they were feeding on grass less than five hundred yards from the den, which was up near the top of a rocky peak. Contrary to accepted principles, the mother totally abandoned her newly born in the face of danger.

The next two occasions when I found bears they were also mothers with cubs—one with three and the other with a single youngster.

It was not, however, until I reached the chosen country that my real experiences with these bears began. After an unsuccessful attempt to reach the easterly end of Izembeck Bay by boat from Bering Sea we went clear around the western end of the Alaska Peninsula, through Isanotski Strait, and to the head of Morofski (Cold) Bay, which is only about nine miles across a low tundra neck of land to Izembeck. From there my outfit was portaged across to a large tundra lake that drains into Izembeck, where I made a base camp.

In the meantime I had been joined by Andy Simons, who has and deserves the reputation of being one of the best big game guides in all Alaska. Throughout the larger part of that entire season Andy and I roamed that greatest of big bear countries together. We used a collapsible canvas canoe for most of our trips out from the base camp, traveling on the sluggish tundra streams and little lakes, and carrying our outfit from one waterway to another. We would generally camp wherever night overtook us, and owing to the heavy motion-picture equipment we often spent several days at a time out on the damp foggy tundra or in the hills without tent or blanket for shelter. Often we traveled on rations of one bannock, which is a thick fried pancake, a day. It was the toughest, though by far the most fascinating, trip I have ever experienced; and Andy said the same when it was ended.

At first, as it was still quite early in the season, and the salmon had not come into the streams, we went up into the hills and mountains to meet the bears just coming down from their dens. On our initial trip to the head of a wide valley surrounded by threatening volcanic peaks we saw a family of bears go into a small side valley and followed them into it the following morning; and there resulted one of the most amazing incidents of all my experiences in the wilds.

As the wind was favorable we went right up into the entrance of the valley, following a trail that led through thick patches of alders. It was not a human trail, but one beaten more than twelve inches in depth in the hard ground entirely by the many soft-padded feet of the bears that had used it.

Just inside the entrance, on the edge of a low plateau, we constructed a small blind of alder branches and settled ourselves to await patiently the possible appearance of the family of bears.

It was some time before we saw them—but unlimited patience is the secret of success in making animal pictures. We would generally take turns at sleeping for an hour or so while the other kept watch.

Suddenly Andy sat upright and smiled as he tightened the grip on his binoculars in a manner that assured me he had located the family.

"There they are!" he whispered, pointing up toward the top of a long grass-covered slide that spread out like a big funnel into the valley.

Breathlessly we focused our glasses on them. They were a long way off, but unmistakably our family of bears—a big mother and three newly born. For a long time they just sat lazily and gazed down into the valley. Then at last they started down the slide. When they

reached the bottom of the valley, however, they disappeared in the alders along the stream.

"They will probably come right down the creek to us," explained Andy.

Impatiently we watched and waited. Once or twice we got a glimpse of them, but they did not seem to be working in our direction. It was almost impossible to refrain from going up to where they were.

At last, and quite suddenly, I was aware of Andy crouching down close to the ground and motioning to me to do the same. Glancing in the direction which he was indicating, my heart gave a jump as I saw a big bear and two small cubs walking leisurely out of the alders less than two hundred feet away on our right. There was not an alder between us and this new family of bears, and as we had been lying out at one side of our blind, we were in plain sight of them. They had appeared as if by magic right beside us.

Hurriedly but cautiously we squirmed around in back of our blind and rearranged it so that they could not see us when I stood up to operate the movie camera.

The mother bear lay down in the sun, and one of the cubs proceeded to have afternoon tea. The other little fellow, however, started wandering off to one side in search for the tender new shoots of a weed which he seemed to like.

I made pictures to my heart's content—the bear family still totally oblivious of our presence, despite the closeness.

Then Andy raised up so that he could whisper to me.

"That little cub is going to get scent of us if he keeps going much farther," he said.

There was a moderate breeze blowing practically across the entrance of the valley at the point where we were located. There was little doubt that the cub would reach a point where the wind would blow across us to him if he continued on his present course. And in low whispers we speculated as to just what was going to happen when that little fellow got what would unquestionably be his very first scent of a human being.

As this was our first visit to that part of the country, and as we were the only humans in the whole section that season, we were quite positive that this newly born cub had not had any previous contact with any of these bears' one and only enemy—man.

Imbued as they are with a tremendous amount of curiosity, especially in the case of the cubs, it was logical to expect that under these particular circumstances the little fellow would wander over for a closer investigation of the strange odors on the breeze. And as we later learned through several subsequent encounters with this same family of bears, such a venturesome, inquisitive

investigation was precisely in keeping with this cub's individual personality. When we got to know them better, they were always referred to as the Murphy Family; and this particular cub was called the Little Roughneck because of his propensity for wandering away from Mother and Apron-strings on adventures of his own. He had one very lame foot, the result of having become too intimate with a prickly porcupine.

He kept wandering farther and farther, until it was only a matter of moments until he would get our scent. Then all of a sudden he stopped. His little head jerked into the air. He rose up erect on his hind feet, and his nose swayed inquisitively in the breeze for a brief moment or two. Then down he dropped and started racing back toward Mother and Apron-strings, just as fast as he could go.

We heard no sound, yet before he had got more than halfway to them he had somehow conveyed the warning that man, their dreaded enemy, was close at hand. For up the two of them got, and onto their hind feet, their noses swaying in the air in an effort to catch some telltale clue on the breeze. In spite of the fact that they could not possibly have got our scent, they did not question the Little Roughneck's warning, and away they all raced together.

Now there is no doubt that our scent must have been

the cub's very first knowledge of a human being and that he positively knew its identity. There is no other thing in the world from which either the cub or mother bear would have made such a hasty retreat. How he knew it, when that first strange scent reached his unsuspecting little nose, is a question which I have never been able satisfactorily to answer. Yet the more I think of it, and the more I learn about bears and other creatures of the wilds, the more convinced I become that it was the result of some sort of a previous warning or advice which that old mother bear had imparted to her cubs. It may sound to many persons too much like a fairy story to suggest that this old mother bear had ever gathered her youngsters close to her, before they left the home den, and told them of the one enemy that might sometimes be met with when they went out into the big world, and from which they must make a hurried escape at the risk of their life. But, fairy tale or no fairy tale, this is my own accepted explanation.

We went into this same valley on several occasions during the summer, and invariably we found either one or both of these same families of bears. Once we saw three families there. We called the place the Nursery. It was undoubtedly the permanent haunt of the mother with two cubs and the mother with three cubs. The latter of these we christened the O'Flaherty Family.

When the salmon came up into the Nursery creek we found the favorite fishing spot of the Murphy Family. On three different occasions, when wind and weather conditions were favorable, we went to a blind which was constructed overlooking the little stretch of the stream where Mother, Apron-strings, and the Little Roughneck preferred to catch their salmon. On all of these occasions they came out of the alders on the same trail and at practically the same time in the afternoon. They feasted to their hearts' content. I made reel after reel of motion pictures, and the bears never did know of our presence or that they had had their pictures taken.

Unmolested, the habits of almost all creatures of the wilds are methodical and unvaried. They have their favorite feeding spots, their favorite day beds, and they follow the same trails, at much the same time of day or night. We always took advantage of this fact, and it was responsible for many of my finest films.

These bears seem to have calendars which they carry around in their hip pockets. At least, they certainly know when to expect the first salmon to poke their noses into the mouths of the creeks and rivers. There was a time when practically all the tracks that we saw were headed toward salt water. The bears were congre-

MOST DANGEROUS *and elusive of all large flesh-eating beasts, the great Kodiak bear is rarely photographed. Here are two remarkable pictures made by the author. Above is a mother bear emerging with two cubs from an alder thicket; below, two young bears are feeding on the first run of salmon in an Arctic stream.*

gating to form a reception committee to meet the salmon.

One day, before the advance guard of the silver horde had entered the creek, we saw three half-grown bears wade out into Izembeck Bay until they had to stand on their hind feet and the water was well up under their armpits, and splash excitedly about in an effort to catch the occasional salmon that apparently was to be seen in the salt water.

There was an old trapping barrabara on the swampy shore of Moffit Cove, which is the easterly end of Izembeck Bay, and we decided to take our little canvas craft and go to this questionable shelter for a few days. This, we knew, could only be done during the night high tide, which would reach its maximum about midnight on the chosen day. Otherwise the water was too shallow even to float our tiny canoe.

We left our base camp so as to reach the mouth of the stream that drained into Izembeck by early evening; then we intended to work our way along the shore toward Moffit Cove as fast as the tide would permit. A thick fog was rolling in from Bering Sea, and a steady drizzle of cold rain was falling when we started out; but this was more the usual than the exception in weather.

At last we reached the swampy shore of Izembeck and were compelled to wait for the incoming tide. We made ourselves as comfortable as possible in the canoe, to try and get a little sleep. But we were both wet through by the rain and the sweat of pulling the canoe and dragging our heavy boots through the grass, mud, and water. This and the chill evening air soon compelled us to abandon our cramped, uncomfortable sleeping quarters and merely wade around to get warm. The only diversion was watching three bears ambling less than half a mile back across the tundra.

With the slowly incoming tide came denser fog and heavier rainfall, bringing unusually early and intense darkness. Waiting in the cold wet blackness, it seemed that the tide would never start to rise. Wet and miserable, we undertook to drag the canoe in the three to five inches of water that extended out for a half mile or more into this end of the bay without more than two inches variation in depth. It was a terrifying and disheartening place.

"Let's leave the canoe, take the camera and films, and try to get to the barrabara on foot," suggested Andy at last.

Fastening the boat to one of the oars stuck upright in the mud, with a handkerchief tied to the top as a flag, we shouldered our heavy packs and started out. It

was miserable walking. If we stayed out in the water we had the sticky mud to contend with, and the tall grass was as bad, if not worse. Soon it was so dark that we could see only a short distance. Once we ran right onto a bear, who owing to his poor eyesight thought we were a couple of his hairy neighbors, but went snorting and puffing and splashing away when he learned his error. From then on every bunch of grass that we approached looked like a grizzly in the foggy darkness.

To add to our troubles the water suddenly began rolling in like a tidal wave. Soon we had to pull our rubber hip boots up as high as they would go, and we were floundering around in an even more miserable manner than before. Our heavy packs cut painfully into our shoulders, and there was no single spot where we could rest them. The whole world seemed nothing but water, mud, grass, fog, rain, wind, and darkness.

We soon decided that a serious mistake had been made and turned back to try to find the canoe. It was now very likely that we would be unable to locate the grass-covered little hill underneath which was the cave-like barrabara; and we began to have visions of not even being able to find the canoe, and of floundering around in water to our waists until daylight broke through the fog and rain so that we might get our bearings.

Everything seemed strange and unfamiliar as we

plowed wearily along. We really did not know, at times, whether we were headed in the right direction, straight out to sea, back into the tundra, or merely going around in circles. It seemed that we had traveled miles—but still we struggled silently along.

At last, and it was more of a miracle than anything else, we came right onto the canoe. Its bobbing and tugging, owing to the wind and waves, had pulled the oar clear over. By morning it might have dislodged the oar and drifted away on the outgoing tide. But we had found it, and joyously piled in—disregardful of mud, water, and baggage!

Long before we were rested, however, the chill air had us shivering in our soaked clothing, and so we started paddling in the general direction in which Andy believed the barrabara was located.

Thoughts of a shelter from the storm—a stove, warmth, hot coffee, and a bunk to rest in—kept us pushing along on what seemed a hopeless search. But at last, when the night was almost spent, we managed to find the barrabara, on a little ridge that ran down to the swampy shore. Wet, tired, and thoroughly miserable, we pushed open the low grass-blocked door of that little mud palace. A musty odor met our nostrils, but it was sweet perfume to us—for it was, by comparison, dry and comfortable inside.

Andy soon had a lighted candle perched on the corner of a rusty camp stove. There was a pile of dry wood beside it, and a glorious fire was soon crackling and whirring, and the smell of strong coffee filled the place.

Outside, the first faint signs of approaching daylight were just breaking through the fog and rain. The wind whipped across the choppy bay against the outgoing tide and the wet soggy tundra; and the Bering Sea thundered in a dismal uncanny monotone of mingled rumbling and booming on its sandy beach about three miles away. But inside the primitive little underground shelter we slept contentedly and totally oblivious of musty odors, creeping insects, and our steaming clothing.

We got up about midday. The rain and fog had disappeared, though it was still cloudy. After a meal of oatmeal and much coffee we started out for our usual reconnaissance of the new district. And the sight which we witnessed that evening was more than ample repayment for the terrible night that we had just gone through.

From a lookout on a knoll not more than a mile in back of the barrabara, we had the rare treat of seeing twelve big bears all come down out of the alders on the opposite hillside to feed in the same salmon stream, all in sight at the same time, and all feeding within a

stretch of not more than half a mile along the same winding creek in the open tundra. It was without doubt one of the greatest sights I have ever seen in the wilds.

Even more interesting than the spectacle of the occasion were the actions of the bears as they came down to the feast. Some individuals, upon reaching the bank of the fishing stream and meeting another bear already there, would go right up to him in a very neighborly fashion to touch noses, as much as to say, "Well, hello, Old-Timer, how'd you sleep to-day? And how's the run of salmon to-night?" With the next one everything might be different, and with surly glances the new arrival would make a detour to avoid an embarrassing or undesired meeting. Then the next one to be met itself might cautiously get out of the way. There was no doubt but that each bear had his own particular personality, his friends, and also his enemies—and it was no secret to his neighbors.

On that particular day Andy and I saw twenty-eight different Kodiak grizzlies, and all within an area of less than five miles. But the following day, when we moved down onto that little flat stretch of tundra, to wait for those twelve big grizzlies to come down to us in the later afternoon, was one of the most thrilling in all my experience.

We were back on the lookout shortly after daybreak,

the camera with us. A fog had come in during the night, but it lifted about an hour after we started out; and we counted ten bears going back up their trails to day beds in the alders.

About ten o'clock we went out to a point on the stream where we had decided our chances would be the best for pictures. Constructing a low blind in the grass, overlooking a stretch of the stream where thousands of salmon were to be seen in the clear shallow water, and where the banks were trodden down like country roads and littered with remains of the feast, we waited for evening (and the bears) to come, taking turns at sleeping for an hour at a time.

At five o'clock we were both on the alert with our binoculars. We kept a sharp eye on the sea gulls that usually announced the arrival of the bears. These birds would fly out to the alders and circle noisily over the first few bears to come down, for they feasted on the leavings from the salmon they caught.

At just about six o'clock the first bear was seen to come out of the alders and start down toward us. Before this one got down to the lower limit of the alders another came out, and the two ambled unconcernedly toward the feasting grounds. The first of these was on a trail that would bring him to the stream well up to our right, and as there was a cross wind we feared

he might get our scent and spoil the evening. There was nothing to do but stay where we were, as to move and show ourselves might make matters even worse. The second bear was headed straight toward us.

Just before the first one reached the stream he stopped quite suddenly, reared up on his hind legs, and wheeled around to go loping back toward the alders. He had got our scent! I got some good pictures of him, though he was too far away for best results.

The second bear, upon seeing the hasty retreat of his neighbor, seemed to sense that something was radically wrong. He stopped quite suddenly and sat down as if to think it over. Inquiringly he gazed at the retreating bear and then down toward the stream. He was no doubt hungry, though apparently not hungry enough to venture to a place where all was not as it should be. As the first bear reached the seclusion of the alders, this second one started reluctantly back up the trail, stopping occasionally to look back suspiciously over his shoulder. He stopped at the edge of the alders and sat down—just like a big hungry dog that was patiently waiting to be fed.

In a little while we saw a new arrival coming into the section. We knew that he was just arriving, for he came hurrying along from clear over the top of the big bald tundra ridge in back of the alders. He appar-

ently knew of the fine fishing in those parts (possibly from a previous year) for he came rapidly straight across country toward the place on the stream where we were in hiding.

He was about halfway across the flat when he stopped quite abruptly and began to sniff along in the grass for a little distance. Then he stood up to his full height to look around, apparently saw the bear sitting at the edge of the alders, and turned and walked suspiciously up to the edge of the cover himself.

Our decision was that he had noticed the fact that a bear had made a hasty getaway from the fishing stream, much as a human might notice the tracks of a running man in the snow, and upon seeing the other bear sitting and gazing suspiciously down toward where we were hidden, he decided there was something wrong and he'd better be careful rather than sorry.

"They're the wisest animals in the world!" laughed Andy.

By this time it had begun to get dusk, for there were heavy dark clouds hanging low over the country. In a little while it would be too dark to get good pictures.

Two big fellows came out of the alders and started down trails that would bring them to the stream a hundred yards or more to our left. We decided to take a

chance on slipping down into the water and hurrying over to meet them.

When we reached the place where it was decided to climb up and look around, they were nowhere to be seen. Evidently they had already reached the stream and were down in it feasting on salmon. We also noticed that the other two bears, seemingly encouraged by the bravery of these, were moving slowly down the trails, and we saw three more coming out of the alders.

Then we saw one of the bears we were stalking at the moment come up out of a little branch creek only about seventy-five yards away and start straight for us. Hurriedly I set up the camera, and Andy began pulling grass to camouflage it. I got some good pictures of the animal as he came lumbering along, but apparently he hit a trail that led farther downstream and came out just around a bend from us.

Before we left that spot we had seen the eighteenth grizzly come out of the alders and march down to feed on salmon in one or the other of the two streams in that section—and all within a period of not more than two and a half hours! They fairly swarmed out of the alders, their brown backs showing above the grass up and down the stream as they periodically clambered out on the bank to feast on the fish they had caught.

A big bear will eat a hundred pounds or more of

salmon in a single night. They are supposed to catch them by swiping them out onto the bank with their paws, though in the many times that we watched them at their fishing, they always caught them in their teeth much as a dog might. They also seemed to have a habit of using the tops of their big broad paws as a sort of plate while they were eating. Only the two sides of the fish were eaten, and they are artists in stripping off the meaty parts.

It was only a matter of minutes until one or more of the big bears would literally come right upon us, and at last this happened. A monster light-colored fellow came ambling along the bank toward us. Nervously we waited. On he came. I was conscious of Andy slipping a shell into the barrel of his gun. The bear looked as big as an elephant in the telephoto finder of my camera.

"Hadn't you better stop him?" I questioned, my heart thumping fast.

Andy stood up and called, "Hey!" just loud enough for the bear to hear him. He stopped, snorted through his nose and mouth, and stared at us defiantly. But he did not budge an inch.

"Hey, you!" called Andy again, waving his arms at the bear. Still he did not move. Apparently this was one of the "bad" members of the tribe, and not knowing exactly what we were, he was more inclined to make

us get out of the way than detour himself. In fact, he took a couple of stealthy steps in our direction and seemed half inclined to make a rush at us, probably to scare us out of the country. Andy took a couple of steps toward the bear and yelled and waved his hat at the big fellow—to which the bear replied with a long decrescendo snort as he swayed his big head back and forth, with his long dog-like nose stuck straight toward us in an effort to get an identifying scent. I expected any instant to see him come rushing right upon us; and he was so close that Andy could not have fired more than one or possibly two shots before he would have covered the distance.

"I'll move out around him so he'll get my scent," whispered Andy, as he started circling out through the grass in the direction of the wind, still holding his gun in readiness and watching the bear every step. The animal watched Andy every bit as closely, and gradually moved so as to keep facing him.

Then there was an unusually loud snort and a puff, and the big fellow wheeled about and went plunging away as if chased by the very devil of all the bears. He had got the scent. He made no stops between there and the alders.

Shortly after this incident I became aware of something which forcibly assured me that hunting bears

with a camera can be far more thrilling than hunting them with a gun. A few minutes before, I had bitten off a fresh chew of tobacco, but when the excitement was all over I found that I had swallowed the whole thing—and suddenly became violently sick! I had previously killed seventeen bears, twelve of which were grizzlies. But on none of those occasions had the excitement reached such a high pitch that I could swallow a chew of tobacco and know nothing about it until the affair was all over, several minutes later!

With the coming of darkness the boldness of the bears seemed to increase. We were literally run out of the country by them that night.

It started to rain before we got back to the barrabara in the darkness; and after a big feed of beans which had been put on the stove before we left that morning, we turned in for a long sleep.

Andy and I stayed in the bear country until after the first snowfall. Then we went to King Cove to catch the mail boat for the great Kenai moose country. Before I left I was able to film the giant brown bear and his wife in nearly all their moods and daily pursuits, and their babies at play and learning the art of catching their own salmon for the feast. We saw them practically every day and night that we were in their country; and while both Andy and I admitted that it was the toughest trip of all

our experience, we also agreed that it was by far the most fascinating. Also, I had quite definitely come to the conclusion that the Kodiak grizzly is more of a gentleman than the brigand he is so often pictured and that his childish curiosity is far more predominant than the bloodthirsty avariciousness with which he is so widely credited.

CHAPTER VI

IN QUEST OF THE ARCTIC MUMMIES

ONE by one my dreams and desires of adventure and accomplishment in the North had been realized, but there still remained that paramount quest to be achieved—the discovery of the traditional Stone Age mummies of the stormy Aleutian Islands.

Bit by bit, through the more than eleven years since I had first become fascinated with stories regarding these forbidden mystic heirlooms of the dim Arctic past and their possible association with one of the early migrations of the human race into the New World, I had formulated definite plans for an expedition to go in search of them and to delve into the other strange mysteries of primitive man in the Far North. The attraction of this undertaking had increased with each added bit of folklore or information. There was a peculiar challenge in it—the tremendous odds against finding what

so many others had failed to locate; the hazards of traveling in a section which is considered one of the stormiest and most dangerous on the face of the earth; and the defying of the ominous warnings and curses of many generations of occult medicine men.

Many factors had contributed to prohibit even attempting to put these plans into operation—foremost among them the large expense necessary for proper equipment and the chartering of a suitable ship. But at last the great opportunity came, and every possible facility was at my disposal. I gambled the success of a very pretentious expedition upon the discovery of some of these ancient Aleut mummies. And although from start to finish one whimsical trick of Fate after another diverted and shaped our course, and all the years of careful planning went for naught, final success came to us in the most unexpected manner.

Mummies are seldom associated with any place except Egypt, least of all with the Arctic, and Alaska is generally thought of as a frozen wilderness still standing on the threshold of exploration, in every respect far removed from any connection with the original population of America. Yet the fact remains that the majority of scientists support the theory that man's first migration into the New World was from Asia by way of Bering Strait or the Aleutian Islands.

It is rather difficult to conceive of a time when the relative big cities and the literal centers of population of our continent were on the now little known shores of Bering Sea, and when our present fabulously citied Eastern seaboard had never been visited by any human being. It is even more difficult to imagine that a culturally degenerate people such as the modern Aleuts, eking out their existence on that bleak, storm-torn string of volcanic islands between Alaska and Siberia, should ever in their history have had any knowledge or inclination toward the sophisticated art of human mummification.

Before going further into the story of this expedition and its findings, it may be well to tell briefly a little about some of the more outstanding theories which have been advanced to explain the identity of the first Americans and the place of their origin. It is not my intention to burden these pages with heavy scientific dissertations of any kind, but these comments will form an important background for parts of my story and are in themselves strange enough to bear tabulating.

That Christopher Columbus was not the discoverer of America is beyond any doubt. Nor even was it Leif Ericsson, the venturesome Viking, whose visit to "Vineland" on our mainland in the year 1000 is the earliest actually recorded in history. For it is well known that both of these eminent explorers found inhabitants al-

ready established along our Atlantic seaboard. Likewise the Russian explorers who first visited the northwestern coast of America found a human population that had come there long before them. Nor have these been the only evidences and complicating factors. The mysteries of the Mound Builders of our Middle West, the Cliff Dwellers of the Southwest, and the remarkable ruins across the entire extent of our Arctic coast all add their clues, though not their answer, to this unsolved story.

So far there has been no conclusive evidence produced which indicates that the human race inhabited this continent prior to the last glacial period, when a large part of it was covered by a vast field of ice. This would establish Man's first coming within the last ten thousand years, a relatively recent date, when we consider that his occupation of the British Isles, for instance, has been estimated at a period of something like four hundred thousand years. So that this, if true, brings the advent of human beings into the New World virtually within the period of written history.

The earliest known reference to the existence of our continent is in the writings of Theopompus, a learned historian and orator who flourished in the time of Alexander the Great, though Plato refers in his own writings to other writings on the subject which date as far back as about 9600 B. C.

Theopompus wrote that "Europe, Asia and Africa are but islands surrounded on all sides by the sea; but there is a continent situated beyond these, which is immense in dimensions, even without limits. . . ." He even referred to its "many cities" and its "different laws." One of these cities referred to is claimed to have had "more than a million inhabitants," and its people had "gold and silver in vast quantities."

Islands or a mainland lying west of Europe and Africa are mentioned by both Homer and Horace. They are called "Atlantides" and were the poet's Elysian Fields.

Plato's reference is somewhat more specific; and while even this is in rather narrative form, it has all the semblance of a substantial background. It is in the dialogue called "Timaeous: or Concerning Nature." He states that "records inform us of the destruction by the Athenians of a singularly powerful army which came from the Atlantic Ocean—to invade Europe and Asia." This powerful army came from "an island larger than Libya and even Asia. . . ." From this island, which he calls Atlantis, Plato says "one could pass to other islands and to the entire continent which surrounds the interior sea." Later he refers to this Island of Atlantis disappearing beneath the sea—"with great earthquakes and inundations, in a single day and one fatal night, all who had been warriors were swallowed up."

This story, theory or whatever it should be labeled, is peculiarly supported by existing traditions among the natives of both North and South America. Many of the tribes attribute their origin to some connection with a great deluge. Even as far west as California, the Aschochimi Indians have a tradition which recounts the drowning of the world so that virtually every person perished.

Whether or not these traditions, which can be found in most standard books on Indian mythology, have any bearing or connection whatever on the story of Atlantis as portrayed by the poets and historians of ancient Europe, is not my purpose even to intimate. But they are certainly significant enough to warrant thoughtful consideration.

Among the other and less seriously considered theories, some seem basically sound and some amusingly naïve. There is the fine tale that one of the ten lost tribes of Israel strayed to the New World to sow the first seed of the human race upon it. Las Casas first propounded this view in the sixteenth century. Lord Kingsborough spent his life and fortune in defense of the theory. And James Adair, who is supposed to have spent forty years among the Southern Indians, previous to 1775, published a huge quarto in which he tortures their every custom and usage into a like one of the Jews, and

every word in their language into a Hebrew one of the same meaning.

Professor Genebiard, more than three hundred years ago, formulated the theory that the Indians were descendants of the Hebrews and Tyrians of King Solomon's fleet sent to Ophir—Ophir being Peru. The Phœnicians, the Carians of Asia Minor, and the expelled Canaanites have variously been nominated as the original ancestors of our Indians. Professor Ameghino has tried to convince the world that the cradle of all humanity was in the Argentine, and others have theorized at length, and upon apparently well founded data, that the First Americans came from Ireland, Japan, China, Polynesia, and an assortment of other places.

That all of these theories are not correct is quite certain. Possibly none of them are the real explanation. But the farther scientists pry into the mystery, the more evident it appears that the answer is an Asiatic origin by way of Bering Strait or the Aleutian Islands.

The fact that it is only approximately fifty miles across Bering Strait from Asia to America, with islands as stepping stones in the center, and that the Aleutian Islands form an almost continuous "land bridge" across the northern margin of the Pacific, lends convincing evidence to this theory. Even to-day the natives make frequent trips across Bering Strait between the two con-

tinents, and they are still using the same type of skin boats used by their prehistoric ancestors. And it is a matter of history that some of the early Russian explorers, whose ships were wrecked in the Aleutian Islands, returned to Kamchatka in the open skin boats used by the natives.

The present descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants naturally should furnish many important and definite scientific clues as to the source from which they sprang. Regarding this, Dr. Clark Wissler, one of the foremost anthropologists of our day, writes that "a review of the New World somatic characters reveals the essential unity of the Indian population, as well as affinities with the mongoloid peoples of Asia."

It seems most likely that the New World was populated by a series of migrations which pushed one another ahead like the waves of an incoming tide. One of these waves may have been the Mound Builders, another the Cliff Dwellers, and so on, and they possibly did not make their entry by exactly the same route.

But to get back to the Aleut mummies, their stormy inhospitable homeland, and their part in this human mystery. I had never suspected that they would be found to be the embalmed bodies of any of the first immigrants to America—that would be expecting far too much. But it was believed that because of their lo-

cation on one of the "land bridges" over which those first immigrants passed, and because they undoubtedly represented a Stone Age culture on that part of the earth, the facts might have a definite and important bearing upon that subject. In this I was not altogether disappointed.

The earliest known account of the Aleuts is in the reports of Michael Nevodtsikof, a Russian, who commanded what appears to be the first vessel known to have reached the Aleutian Islands proper. This was in 1745. Regarding the natives, he is credited with saying that "they were observed to have hatchets of sharpened stone and needles of bone. . . . They live upon the flesh of sea otters, seals and sea lions, which they kill with clubs and long lances."

A more complete account is given by Andrean Tolstyk, who visited the islands in 1760. He says:

". . . they [the Aleuts] live in holes dug in the earth, in which they make no fires, even in winter. Their clothes are made like shirts, of the skins of guillimots and puffins. . . . They catch cod and turbot with bone hooks and eat them raw. . . . In the severest weather they make no addition to their usual clothing. In order to warm themselves in winter, when it is very cold, they burn a heap of dry grass over which they stand to catch the heat under their clothing. And whenever they

pass the night at a distance from home, they dig a hole in the earth and lay themselves down in it, covered only with their clothes or mats of platted grass. They are without the least appearance of decency, and seem but few degrees removed from brutes."[1]

Another contemporaneous Russian explorer gives an even more graphic picture of the Aleuts at their earliest contact with a branch of our own civilization. He says:

"These savages . . . dwell in large caves from forty to eighty yards long, from six to eight broad and four to five high. . . . Although no fires are ever made in these caves . . . both sexes sit naked. They feed upon the flesh of all sorts of sea animals, and generally eat it raw. . . . Marriage ceremonies are unknown and each man takes as many wives as he can maintain. These women and their children are not unfrequently bartered in exchange for commodities—often a bladder of fat is the price. . . . When they want to glue their stone arrows to the shaft, they strike their nose until it bleeds and use the blood as glue."[2]

These excerpts give a fairly comprehensive idea of the low type of culture which the Aleuts possessed at the time of their discovery by the Russians. It seemed almost beyond reason to expect such a people ever to have had any knowledge of human mummification.

[1]Coxe's *Russian Discoveries*, 1787.

[2]Soloviof, 1764.

There is a tradition among the present-day natives which says they first came to that part of the earth from a place that is referred to as "Ta-nam Annuna." Vineaminoff, the greatest authority regarding these people, interprets this to mean a part of the Asiatic continent. It may also be significant that the natives apply this same name to one of the Islands of the Four Mountains —legendary home of the mummies. And another tradition explains that the Aleuts "descended from a dog that fell from the sky on the Island of Umnak," an island which adjoins the Four Mountain group. This story is particularly interesting because the Aleuts have had little or no practical use for dogs, having to travel almost exclusively by boat.

Our expedition was known as the Stoll-McCracken Siberian Arctic Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History, and was organized through the coöperation of that institution and Mr. Charles H. Stoll, a sportsman of New York City.

We had a diversity of objects to be accomplished, besides undertaking to find the mummified bodies of Stone Age Aleuts. There were ancient village sites along the Bering Sea coast to be excavated, which might hold even more important secrets; the museum authorities were especially anxious to get specimens and materials for a

group of the ponderous pre-historic appearing Pacific walrus for a group in the new Hall of Ocean Life; they needed a large collection of aquatic Arctic birds to complete the series of American habitat groups; and there were rare Siberian animals which would make valuable additions to their halls and study cabinets.

Our plans, once definitely launched, grew like a snowball. We chartered the schooner *Morrissey,* veteran of numerous voyages into the Arctic ice and probably the best known expedition vessel in the world; and as skipper we arranged to have its owner, Captain Robert A. (Bob) Bartlett, who in 1909 had piloted Admiral Peary on his successful conquest of the North Pole, and who is considered the foremost polar navigator alive to-day. He gathered a carefully picked crew of seasoned Nova Scotia and Newfoundland seamen for the crew, among them "Billy the Cook" Prichard, who had also served corned beef and cabbage, plum duff, and other fo'c'sle concoctions to Admiral Peary on his historic voyage.

Besides Mr. and Mrs. Stoll, who accompanied the expedition to collect many of the larger animals for the museum as well as for their private trophy rooms, the personnel included four important members of the museum staff. H. E. Anthony, Curator of Mammals, headed the list. Dr. Edward M. Weyer, Jr., went as my assistant to take charge of the details of the archeologi-

cal and anthropological work. F. L. Jaques, widely known for his fine paintings of game birds and the wonderful backgrounds of some of the groups in the museum, was responsible for the collecting of birds as well as the making of sketches of all the animals taken, and for working out the backgrounds for the finished groups. Andrew Johnstone had the important task of seeing that all the larger animals were correctly skinned and the pelts properly preserved for mounting. The *Morrissey's* wireless equipment was in the charge of Edward Manley, youthful veteran of two previous Arctic expeditions on the same ship; Junius Bird, as botanist and assistant engineer, and Jim Dave, first engineer. Then, also, there was "Tough," my ludicrous big English bulldog of high pedigree and a badly ingrown countenance, who, for no reason of his own, was taken along as official mascot.

The *Morrissey* was at Sydney, Nova Scotia, which necessitated her being taken on the long preliminary voyage down through the Panama Canal and up the Pacific coast to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, where it was planned to have the personnel of the expedition join the ship. This afforded us an opportunity of bringing her into New York for overhauling and supplying special equipment for the long hard trip.

The itinerary for the expedition called for a trip of

approximately six months after leaving Prince Rupert, though as the undertaking was to carry us well up the hazardous Arctic coast of Siberia and into the polar ice, where there is always a serious chance of being trapped for an entire winter or longer, it was necessary to outfit for about a year and a half and a midwinter temperature of possibly sixty-five degrees or more below zero.

The *Morrissey's* hull was newly sheathed with "iron bark" to withstand the battering of ice floes, and new canvas was procured for the array of great white wings that would be spread to the winds from her two tall masts. A special heating plant was installed, with radiators in every compartment and a special device for forcing the heat through the pipes. Cases of heaviest woollen clothing and more than fifteen tons of food supplies were carefully checked into her hold and lockers. There were, among other things, twenty-five barrels of flour, one hundred thousand cigarettes, six hundred pounds of smoking tobacco, and three hundred pounds of chewing tobacco, to say nothing of the numerous cases of chewing gum, several dozen powerful flashlights, candy, medicines, and equipment for the capture of almost every form of animal life, ranging from butterflies to full-grown whales. The long deck was completely covered with drums of fuel oil for her Diesel engine; cases of dynamite to use in emergency for blasting a channel

in the ice and to procure deep-sea fish, and sealed milk cans filled with pure alcohol for preserving otherwise perishable forms of life.

At last, just as the first rays of daylight were blazing into the sky over the British Columbia mountains on the first day of May, 1928, the schooner *Morrissey* pulled away from the Canadian National dock, and the haze-shrouded buildings of Prince Rupert faded from view. We were on our way. Though it was my fourth start for Alaska, I was quite as thrilled as upon my initial voyage. For while my first trip had been shrouded in unknown adventures which lay ahead, this trip was overshadowed even more colorfully by preconceived hazards, known hardships, and the solving of mysteries toward which we were aiming with definitely laid plans; and never before had I started out with such pretentious and elaborate facilities at my command.

The Alaskan newspapers, I had learned to my surprise and amusement, had ridiculed the announcement of undertaking to discover ancient human mummies out in the Aleutian Islands. Even the paper which is published in the town nearest to the particular section where it was suspected the mummies existed had had a hearty laugh in their editorial columns at my expense. This is a town in which I had lived and where I had many

friends, and the attitude which they took only added an extra touch of enthusiasm to my determination.

We spent the first few days, while our hundred-foot, two-masted vessel was plying northward through the scenic beauties of the calm river-like Inside Passage of Alaska, in getting our equipment in order and in becoming acquainted with our new seagoing home.

The sun occasionally broke through billowy clouds that appeared to roll lazily over the tops of the snow-capped mountains. There was the warm, drowsy feeling of northland spring in the air. Long V's of geese slipped across the sky, sailing high and headed in the same direction as ourselves. They passed overhead so slowly and disappeared into the shroud of distance so quickly that our schooner seemed to be standing still. Now and then an eagle soared into sight; a flock of sea ducks whirred past; or a school of shiny black and white porpoises came to leap and dive playfully under the long graceful bowsprit.

Someone unearthed a box containing a small harpoon gun and all the necessary accessories, which had been brought along especially for taking porpoises and the like; and within a very few minutes things were organized for the attempted capture of the expedition's first trophies.

To juggle one's equilibrium on the whisker-boom of

a moving schooner and shoot a harpoon into one of those darting, leaping, diving greyhounds of the sea is no easy accomplishment. It is as tricky as shooting quail, if not more so. The animal—for the porpoise belongs to the same family as the whale—is up and gone with a puff and a splash in a split second. And once that long barbed steel shaft is implanted in his black back, it is like having a line attached to a shot cannon ball.

The capture of the first porpoise not only provided us with the first excitement, but it also was responsible for the organization of a unique society among the members of our expedition.

Andy Johnstone was cutting the meat away from the porpoise skeleton. It was virtually *black*—about as unpalatable in appearance as any meat possibly could be.

"I wonder how it would taste?" someone questioned.

"Let's try it," another suggested.

Billy the Cook was induced to fry the tenderloin, which, when set on the table, looked much like aged liver or pieces of the bottom of an old rubber boot. But, to our surprise, it was delicious. And as a result we decided to form the Eat Everything Club, membership in which was entirely conditional upon eating some part of every specimen, large or small, which was taken on the expedition.

Club activities progressed very smoothly, and we lost

no members, until one fine day I shot an aged bald-headed eagle. He was a big old bird who had long, long ago passed the tender "frying" stage. It was even difficult to cut off the sinewy breast—and it seemed that our Eat Everything Club was due for complete annihilation.

We hung the eagle meat in the ship's rigging with the carcasses of a couple of deer, on the meat of which we had been feeding, until someone should get up courage enough to tackle the aged bird.

George, the first mate of the crew, who incidentally was about as rough-and-ready a sea dog as ever came from Nova Scotia or Newfoundland, had a habit of preparing a little meal for himself at midnight, at the end of his watch on deck. One night he decided to fry himself a chunk of deer meat, and went up onto the pitch-dark deck to cut off the desired meat from one of the carcasses hanging in the rigging. He got what was believed to be a piece of deer, and sleepily proceeded to fry it in the dimly lit galley.

But the next morning, when Billy the Cook got up at 4 A. M. to start breakfast, he found the piece of meat still in the frying pan. It showed signs of having been considerably hacked at with a knife, and the corners showed evidence of having been chewed at by human teeth. But it was still intact. George had unknowingly

picked one of the pieces of eagle breast; and after a long and persistent attempt to get it cooked and to eat it, he had disgustedly slammed it into the frying pan which was shoved onto the back of the stove, and had rolled into his bunk.

We held a post-mortem over the piece of meat, but the final decision was that even the mate had lost his membership in the Eat Everything Club.

Then also, to while away the long evenings on our little ship, we had a Penny Ante Club. It was quite an institution. Practically every night after supper was over and the table was cleared, excepting of course the days when we were out in the field away from the *Morrissey*, we got out the cards for our game. At the end of more than five months of playing, when the expedition (and our poker game) was brought to an end, the largest winner was credited with a little over seven dollars' profit, and the heaviest loser was debited four dollars and fifteen cents. Regularly every evening at the completion of the game, a careful check-up was made and totals entered in a book given over to that purpose. For anyone to get a few dollars ahead always meant that he would be subjected to unmerciful competition from all the rest of the players until his winnings were wiped out. But it afforded us a relaxation and a lot of fun.

The scene of our first serious task was on the Bering

Sea coast of the Alaska Peninsula in the vicinity of Port Moller Bay, and by the time the *Morrissey* had made the long rough trip across the stormy Gulf of Alaska, fought her way around the end of the continent and come to anchor in quiet waters, we were all ready enough to go ashore on our various tasks.

CHAPTER VII

HUNTERS, PAST AND PRESENT

THERE was an interesting correlation between the work of our two field parties during the time the *Morrissey* was anchored in Port Moller Bay. One of the groups set out, equipped with high-powered rifles of the most modern design, to get some of the great tundra grizzlies and other living creatures for which that section is famous; the other group undertook to unearth and piece together the intimate story of the people who lived there centuries ago and who lived and clothed themselves largely by hunting those same dangerous wild animals with nothing more than a piece of chipped stone or sharpened bone on the end of a stick.

Stalking and slaying the mighty Kodiak grizzly, with a gun that strikes a death-dealing blow of several thousand pounds' power at a distance of a hundred yards or

more, is considered one of the greatest of sportsmen's accomplishments; yet the manner in which those prehistoric hunters regularly killed the same powerful brutes in hand-to-hand conflict makes the conquests of present-day nimrods seem by comparison like a ping-pong game between two feeble old inmates of a soldiers' home. And not only did the ancients thus kill the biggest of bears, but all the other animals of the surrounding land and sea as well—caribou, sea lions, walrus, and even the largest of whales. No wonder is it, when we stop to think, that the Stone Age Aleuts attributed such a high rank to their famous tojas, or whale hunters, and honored them with a mummified preservation!

The mere unearthing of ancient villages or searching the ground for bits of primitive workmanship and telltale evidences which the inhabitants have left behind, may seem at first thought an uninteresting occupation. And yet, when one begins to see a graphic story of an unknown people gradually constructed from these apparently insignificant finds, it becomes intensely fascinating. It is by this means that the keen eye and craft of the archeologist penetrates beyond the horizon of history and writes new pages on the lives of our long forgotten relatives.

Along the shores of practically every bay on the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands are to be

found the mute evidences of an extensive prehistoric occupation, of which almost nothing is known.

For the first excavations of our expedition I had chosen the site of an ancient village of unusual outward promise and peculiarly interesting location. It was one that I had visited some five years previously when accompanying a fur trader who went there regularly to bathe in the hot springs, which bubble and steam incessantly in its very center, as a cure for his rheumatism. Both white men and natives came from miles around, throughout the summer and winter, to bask in the warm medicinal waters. The vast heaps of chalky clam shells and bones meant nothing to these men save a place where with little effort they could prod around with a stick and uncover "old-time" bone harpoon heads, flint "darts," and an occasional ivory carving or stone lamp. But to us it meant an intricate puzzle, which we must gradually and carefully piece together into a comprehensive story.

Because of the very shallow character of Port Moller Bay, the *Morrissey,* which draws more than eleven feet of water, had to be anchored just inside the long sand spit in the eastern portal of the bay. The Hot Springs village site is on a peninsula in the center of the bay, like the middle point of a W, about eight miles from the

anchorage. Our camp equipment, food, tools, wireless telephone, etc., had to be transported this remaining distance in our two motor launches.

We were all eager to get into the field. I got Weyer's party and their equipment loaded into the launches, and away we went.

As our boats rounded the bluff which marked the entrance to the sheltered little harbor in the larger bay, where the primitive city had existed, the deep layers of chalky white refuse heaps could be seen where the long processes of natural erosion had exposed them. They lay along the face of the cliff, and behind them rose a thin plume of steam that marked the ever bubbling hot springs. Weyer began to betray his enthusiasm long before our boat had grounded against the sandy beach, and even Tough, my ludicrous English bulldog, seemed to take a fancy to the place and jumped overboard to swim ponderously to the shore.

The village itself occupied a large flat area extending from the hot springs to the base of the mountains. On the side next to the bay was an elevation that dropped off in a sheer precipice; and it was there that the people had dumped the bones and clam shells left over from their feasts. On either hand were the waters of other small harbors that indented the coast line of the peninsula in the big bay.

Camp was pitched alongside one of the hot spring's pools, where the ground was always warm and where canned goods could be heated or a hot bath of any temperature to suit was waiting for anyone who wanted to indulge. Then, while some of the others were transporting the boxes and bags of equipment up from the beach, Weyer and I started out to give the place a hurried inspection.

In almost no time, while picking around among the exposed layers of chalky shells and animal bones, we found specimens of harpoon heads that had been carved out of ivory and bone, as well as stone arrowheads and spearheads and a few relics made from the antlers of caribou.

The first couple of days were spent in reconnaissance work and map making. Then the actual excavating and piecing together of the story was begun.

First we dug wide trenches to cross-section the "kitchen middens" or refuse heaps on the elevated cape in front of the village. Careful scrutiny was made of every shovelful of the excavated material that no implement or other telltale article might be missed. Every implement or other artifact was numbered and catalogued as found, with notations as to location, depth, etc. The more recent things were, of course, those nearest the surface. And as the digging progressed in depth the finds

became older in age. Through this medium one phase of a chronological history of the village could be made.

In order to reach the earliest traces of human life, some of the excavations had to be carried to a depth of about twelve feet. Such a depth, though of no tremendous significance in itself, was important because of the particular conditions of the location. For we were working in an area elevated about fifty feet above the level of the beach and forming a comparatively narrow point of land surrounded by water on three sides. Strong winds, for which that part of the world is famous, swept it incessantly in an apparent effort to blow every bit of earth and dust into the little harbors on either side. The frequent and heavy Alaskan rains were always trying to wash the place away. In fact, all of the natural elements were working against the upbuilding of this place. Ground accumulates very slowly even under ideal conditions. Yet in one of the excavations we found a surface layer of black earth five feet thick, which indicated the extreme antiquity of even the topmost of the kitchen refuse beneath it.

Mute evidence was found of the seasonal diet of those Stone Age natives. Layers of crumbling salmon bones told of the summer plentifulness of the big fish, when it was probably unnecessary to hunt game such as bear and caribou. On the other hand, thin layers of powdery sea-

urchin shells gave their own testimony of harder times. And thick layers of the bones of walrus, whale, and the other large animals stirred our imaginations with pictures of thrilling encounters between these great creatures and man with his primitive weapons.

Charred evidences of camp fires were found, around which the villagers probably gathered to cook the flesh of their quarry and to listen to tales of spectacular prowess in the hunting field, although probably most of their meat was eaten raw. Each discovery made was like a voice speaking out of the far distant past and further confirmed the antiquity of this particular village. It was probably one of the oldest ever investigated in that part of the continent.

One of the excavations was for the most part through layers of clam shells that at the bottom had become so tightly packed by the pressure and action of ground water that they presented all the difficulty of cutting through solid concrete. This solidifying process must have taken centuries, and might be compared with the gradual geologic process of rock foundation.

Several thousand implements and other artifacts were found during the progress of the excavations. These were harpoon, spear, and arrow heads made of bone, ivory, and stone; there were grooved-stone war clubs, stone knives, primitive ivory carvings, implements

fashioned from caribou horns, and a large number of other rare articles of various sorts.

A very significant feature of our excavations was the discovery that the oil-burning stone lamps, so common and yet so important in the lives of nearly all the Arctic natives of which we have any records, were found in this village site only in the upper and more recent strata. From this it seems quite apparent that the strata where it was not found mark a period in the lives of the inhabitants before the stone lamp was invented. All this lends the picture of those primitive peoples more drama than the surface evidence might make it appear.

Of course, our excavations were not extensive enough to assure us that lamps of other materials had not been used, but in the nature of things there must have been a time when the lamp was unknown.

Their habitations were nothing more than underground burrows, reinforced with the ribs of whales or driftwood, and covered with grass and earth. Over a shallow hole in the ground they simply erected a crude frame of whale ribs or driftwood. They covered this with tundra grass and heaped earth over the whole thing—and called it a home! Bare of all furnishings save the hides of the wild animals they killed with crude spears and arrows, and without any artificial heat even in the dead of winter, these dwellings were little ad-

vanced over the dens of bears or foxes, and the people little advanced over the wild creatures themselves.

The invention of the stone lamp was therefore a great stride forward in their culture, for it brought artificial heat and a means of cooking into their underground dwellings. This simple little invention meant more in the lives of those people than do the gas engine or electricity in our own.

The oil or grease from the seals, whales, and even bears which they killed was used as fuel in these saucer-shaped stones. The wick was of moss. Nor was the lighting of a fire an easy matter. Papers of matches that come free with purchases of cigarettes were unknown to them. Making fire was a very tedious task. Dry feathery down of certain weeds or fur mixed with sulphur was used as tinder. Fire was kindled with the fire drill, the materials of which are a bit of dry wood with a shallow hole or cup-shaped cavity in a piece of wood or ivory, in which was placed the end of a fire-making rod that was revolved at such a high rate of speed that the friction heated the wood dust ground out to a smoldering state. It was then coaxed into a flame by careful blowing and the addition of tinder and other dry material.

At the time of the first contact with these people by explorers of our own civilization, which was not much more than a hundred and fifty years ago, the popular

method of warming one's self was by the use of these little individual heating plants. After the stone saucer was filled with oil, possibly from an animal just killed, it was lighted along the moss wick and placed on the ground. Then our primitive gentleman or lady would squat down over it, arranging his or her long shirt-like garment so that its hem would lie snugly on the ground and form a sort of tent inside of which the tiny furnace would slowly warm the naked body.

It was a point of social etiquette among the natives, according to the earliest Russian visitors, to light the best oil lamp one had and let the guest put it under his own shirt to warm himself. And when they went on a hunting trip the little stone lamp was taken along. The fuel was gotten from the animal that was killed, and the flesh, though generally eaten raw, could be cooked over it.

Dr. Waldemar Jochelson, the eminent Russian scientist who has spent much time in research work in that part of the world, states in his paper, "Archeological Investigations in the Aleutian Islands":

"*A'ñux* means 'warmer,' also the process of warming; the verbal form is *a'ñu,* to warm oneself over a lamp. The use of the 'warmer' was as follows: People stood over the burning lamp or sat over it in a squatting position, covering it with their shirt-like coats. The ancient

Aleut wore footwear only or a breechcloth and footwear under their coats, so the naked body could easily be warmed. Before getting in skin-boats the Aleuts took off their footwear. Sick people were also seated over the *a'ñux,* to make them perspire. Generally, the warming-lamp served in place of the sweat-bath, which was unknown to the Aleut before the coming of the Russians. As was in later days the case with the sweat-bath, visitors were always offered the use of a warming-lamp."

Throughout our excavations not a single fragment of pottery was found. This may be taken as an indication that their food was eaten raw, or merely cooked on a stick over an open fire. Possibly, however, they may have utilized the natural cooking facilities of the hot springs around which their village had been built. That this is within reasonable practicability may be assumed from the fact that we regularly heated canned goods, made tea, and boiled eggs in the bubbling springs for our own meals.

It is beyond doubt that the peoples who inhabited that primitive village around the hot springs and the other contemporaneous settlements along the Bering Sea coast lived entirely off nature. Practically everything that they ate or wore was derived from hunting or fishing. And their only weapons were the bow and arrow, the harpoon, grooved stone clubs, and knives of stone

and bone. They knew nothing of the use of metals. They were Stone Age people.

That they were expert and intrepid hunters is beyond doubt. In places we dug through layers of practically nothing but bones to the depth of three to five feet, and the bones were those of the ferocious tundra grizzlies, monster whales, walrus, sea lions, caribou, and all the other wild creatures of the district—hundreds of them—that had fallen to the crude weapons and daring of those people. The bones were all mixed up, just as they had been thrown away after the meat had been torn from them in the primitive feasts.

As we dug through these telltale layers of bones, identifying a bear bone or a walrus bone, or pulling out the giant vertebræ of a whale, and occasionally finding a harpoon head or baby's toy made of ivory, our thoughts often carried us back to the time when they had been thrown there. We tried to visualize the exploits, the spectacular battles and narrow escapes, of some of the famous hunters. What a thrilling story it would make if one could but write an intimate biography of one of those ancient hunters who went out regularly with nothing more than a few sticks, tipped with stone or bone points, to slay the great animals of the North.

Of course, the providing of food for his family did

not always require the ancient Alaskans to battle to the death with some powerful bear or whale; for they got many a meal from the beach and the bay right in front of their village. As X. B. Jones, my murderous squaw-man dog musher, used to say: "When the tide goes out the table is set." There were generally plenty of clams and cockles to be gathered; soles and codfish could usually be caught; great spider crabs were to be found on the rocky reefs, and throughout most of the summer the salmon teemed in untold thousands in most of the streams. Then, too, there was the almost inexhaustible supply of sea birds' eggs to be gathered in the spring and kept throughout the summer, and the tender young birds later on.

Throughout the weeks that we were excavating in the Hot Springs village site, an almost constant search of the surrounding rocky cliffs was also carried on in the vague hope that some secret burial cave might be found, where a mummified chieftain or famous hunter had been hidden amid all his Stone Age splendor. But no such treasure was discovered.

Among the most interesting finds which we unearthed were two unusual effigy masks carved from single pieces of bone, probably that of a whale. Nothing like them had ever been found before, and they probably represented the only known likeness to those an-

cient dwellers of the Bering Sea coast of the Alaska Peninsula. Strangely enough, although they were found less than fifty feet apart, at about the same depth from the surface, and although the material and mode of carving are practically the same, their facial characteristics are about as dissimilar as though they had come from two widely separated parts of the earth. One is distinctly round in character, while the other is strikingly elongate, with real teeth inserted in a gaping mouth. They are as different as a typical Chinaman is from an Old Country Irishman.

One of these strange masks was found with a skeleton that had been buried under unique circumstances. Each bone was covered with a heavy pigment of finely ground bright red rock and sparkling mica. This painting process may have been completed after all the flesh had been removed from the bones. The burial had taken place in a snug frame of flat rocks, and directly over it lay the skulls of a walrus and a whale. Probably this individual had been a famous hunter among his people, and this was their weird manner of according him proper interment.

While the excavations were being carried forward the members of our other field party were searching the hills and tundra for suitable specimens of giant grizzlies and other fauna of the region. The results around the

SOME OF THE RELICS—*artifacts is the technical name of a Far Northern Stone Age that may indicate the original settlement of America across the land bridge of the Aleutian Islands.*

THESE TWO MASKS *are unique in the history of Alaskan exploration—nothing like them has ever been found before or since. They were carved from whalebone with stone implements, and although of very different facial types, were discovered close together in the same midden.*

head of Port Moller Bay, under the pilotage of a local registered guide required by the territorial law, had been very discouraging. To make matters worse, the guide insisted upon leaving about two weeks before the end of the season and before any desirable bears had been found, to go home to his more lucrative fishing pursuits.

Leaving Weyer in charge of the excavations at Hot Springs village site, I took the hunting party into a somewhat inaccessible section around what is known locally among the natives as Bear Lake, about thirty miles east of Port Moller. The result of this trip was the picking of seven fine bears within six days after we set up our tents on the shores of the lake. The museum's requirements were fulfilled, and both Merle and Charlie Stoll got some fine trophies for their personal collections.

Incidental to this hunt at Bear Lake was a little trip back into the mountains in the course of which we witnessed a most dramatic tragedy of the wilds and played a part in a primitive scene that was in certain respects a reënactment of what the ancient inhabitants of Hot Springs village had no doubt experienced in the same section many hundreds of years before.

Charlie and I, with two natives, left camp early one morning with the intention of spending a night or two out in the mountains "siwashing" without tent or blankets. We took very little food with us. It was to

be our final attempt to get a really big bear before abandoning the hunt and returning to the *Morrissey*, and turning our attention more seriously to the discovery of ancient mummies; and we did not want to be encumbered with any heavy equipment.

The first morning we saw several bears, but as none were of unusual size we only amused ourselves for a time in watching them through our binoculars, and then continued on our way farther back into the volcanic mountains. During the middle of the day we picked out a little cove on a hillside, sheltered from the chill wind, and curled up in the sun for a few hours' sleep.

In the afternoon we came upon a fair sized grizzly that was lying in the center of an open space in the alders and calmly feasting upon a freshly killed meal. Running frantically in circles around the bear was a doe caribou; and upon closer inspection we saw that the bear's feast was a newly born caribou calf. With her head swinging and jerking nervously as she pranced almost frantically about, the mother caribou was pathetically making a helpless attempt to rescue her newly arrived baby from its sad predicament. But the bear seemed totally oblivious of her presence as he contentedly tore off the tender flesh and slowly devoured it.

Our first impulse was to kill the bear immediately.

But a second thought convinced us that such an act would right no wrong, for what had already happened was nothing more than a graphic manifestation of the relentless law of the wilds—that only the fleetest of foot and the wariest of wits shall survive. So we just sat down to watch and to soliloquize upon the spectacle.

As we watched there was a movement in the edge of the alders, and another creature of the wilds came cautiously out into the little opening. It was a big wolverine —like a miniature, short-legged bear—that had been attracted by the pungent scent of fresh blood on the chill breeze. For a few moments its blunt brown snout swayed in the air as it sniffed the appetizing odors; then it slyly circled as if to learn if any stray bits of the feast were lying beyond the protection of the grizzly's death-dealing claws. All the while the bereaved mother caribou continued her nervous prancing and running around the scene.

Not long afterward a pair of red foxes emerged as if by magic from the alder thickets and sat down to survey the situation. But probably wiser than the slow-going wolverine, and knowing what slight chances they had of participating in the feast, they shortly disappeared from sight as quickly and silently as they had come.

Soon we too passed on. But the drama and the pathos of that scene shall always remain indelibly etched on my memory.

That same evening we located two very large bears feeding on a little patch of newly sprouted green grass. Stalking up to within twenty-five or thirty yards of them and being assured that they were of tremendous size and attractive appearance, Charlie dropped them both practically in their tracks and ended our bear-hunting conquests.

We were much too far from camp to return that night, for the spring darkness had settled upon the valley before we had both the bears skinned. There were still patches of snow on the ground, even in the valleys, and the bleak peaks all around were mottled white. With the coming of night it became very cold; and despite the fact that we had eaten most of our lunch during the day, we were terribly hungry.

As we had skinned one of the bears I had cut out a couple of long chunks of the animal's tenderloin, and buried it in a snow bank near by. One of the natives built a fire of dead alders in the shelter of the thicket a few feet from where one of the big beasts had fallen, and when both the heavy hides were removed and spread out on the ground, we gathered around the cheery crackling fire and proceeded to cook chunks of the deep

red tenderloin on sticks over the blaze. The meat was tough but juicy, and we were all hungry enough to enjoy it.

The cold Arctic night had settled, and we were very weary. We lay down upon beds made of long dead grass pulled from the hillside and covered ourselves with the heavy moist hides which had just been skinned off our quarries. Charlie and I had one and the natives the other. And as the flicker of our camp fire died in its own ashes, and the damp Northern cold crept in to kill its warmth, we slept soundly and comfortably.

The pelts were greasy and bloody, and when morning came our faces were smeared rather gruesomely from ear to ear. But we were rested; and after a breakfast of more grizzly tenderloin cooked on sticks over the fire, we started back toward our camp on Bear Lake. Our bear-hunting mission had been completed.

Returning to Port Moller Bay the archeological party were transported to the schooner *Morrissey* with their many cases and boxes of ancient spoils, and we headed out into stormy Bering Sea again to sail on to greater adventures and far more fascinating discoveries.

CHAPTER VIII

"GOD'S FROZEN CHILDREN"

THERE is probably no spot on all the earth where life unfolds a stranger drama; where human isolation has been more complete throughout a larger part of its existence; or whose unknown history occupies a more significant place in the chronicles of our continent, than the two tiny rocky Diomede Islands in the center of Bering Strait. It is here that Asia and America are but two miles apart; where primitive man had but two short journeys of twenty-five miles each in his skin canoes to make the first migration from the mainland of the Old World to the New, and where Eskimo culture is still retained, defiant to the onward march of the white man's civilization from the South in its most unadulterated purity.

After a long stormy trip across the entire breadth of

Bering Sea, the schooner *Morrissey* crept into the narrow channel between Big and Little Diomede and dropped her anchor about half a mile from the primitive little village of rock and earth covered dwellings at the base of the barren cliffs of the smaller island.

We had no previous expectation of finding any ancient human mummies on the Diomede Islands; nor had we planned any extensive excavations there which might shed new light upon the real story of human migrations into the New World. But before the schooner *Morrissey* hove her heavy anchor and pointed her weather-scarred bow toward new adventures along the north coast of Siberia and the polar ice pack, we had visualized a cross-section of western Eskimo life in one of its most primitive stages, a page which has its own important place in the obscure story of the human race in our northland, and, from the standpoint of comparison, is a most interesting side light upon the story of the Aleutian Island mummies.

Since the Diomedes are the most logical "stepping stones" used by the first human beings to visit America, they are the source of probably the most important historical information regarding our entire continent. Added to this is the fact that no other spot in the American Arctic can boast a present-day culture of more unadulterated mystic rites and pagan practices.

To visit these remote tribal hermits of the Arctic was for me the realization of a desire of long standing and deep interest. It was like a trip into the dim past; and a portrayal of their present manners and customs is in many respects a description of the peoples who inhabited the region around Bering Sea many centuries ago.

No sooner had our schooner's big anchors splashed in the water than a large walrus-hide canoe, or *umiak,* was pushed out through the rocks and breakers in front of the village and paddled speedily toward us. It was a boat of probably the identical design and materials which brought the first immigrants to the shores of the New World untold years ago; and it was crowded with a score or more of fur-clad natives.

Grinning and jabbering among themselves they clambered up onto the *Morrissey's* deck. They were a picturesque lot. Round faces peeked out from the wolverine or wolfskin fringes that circled the hoods of their reindeer parkas—some with eyes so slant that they might well have come from the heart of Mongolia. Some were bare-headed, their hoods pushed down around their necks displaying heavy shocks of coarse straight jet black hair peculiarly reminiscent of Chinese dolls. All wore fancy fur boots or mukluks. Only here and there a pair of white man's pants, a pipe, or a cigarette gave mute evidence of contact with the white man's world.

Boats very rarely visit the Diomede Islands, mainly because the inhabitants seldom have little more than a few walrus tusks or polar bear hides of a commercial value to trade. But each of the natives in the big umiak carried a sealskin bag, or poke, which we shortly learned contained varied assortments of ivory carvings, strings of beads made of polished fossil ivory, skin garments, and other interesting articles which they had brought to exchange for tobacco, food, or woollen clothing. Even the youngsters had their own little bags of trade goods, and the anticipating glint in their smoky animal-like eyes seemed somehow to say that they hoped to procure candy or other tidbits which youngsters crave. But to our surprise, the articles which they produced and which were the results of their own handiwork, they generally wanted to trade for coffee, tea, sugar and other items ostensibly for the family needs. One little fellow asked to exchange his lone string of wobbly-shaped ivory beads for a pair of lady's stockings for his mother.

One by one they would "take the floor"; and one by one they would draw out of their pokes the things they had brought to trade. While all the rest looked on, apparently to see how good a bargain their neighbor could make, an interpreter would announce to us what the owner desired in exchange.

Because our course was to take us far up into the

treacherous polar ice, where there is always a chance of being trapped and held captive for a winter or longer, and because ours was not a trading schooner, we were reluctant to part with any great amount of our supplies. But when some of the natives began to produce ancient implements of ivory, jade and slate, which we learned had been dug out of the ground on the site of the present village, our discretion was completely forgotten; and when the natives learned that it was these articles which we were most anxious to procure, it started what in the next few days became a steady stream of antiquities. They produced ivory harpoon heads which had lain in the ground for so many centuries that they were almost black from fossilization; there were similarly aged miniature carved fish, resembling some of the most popular "lures" carried by modern fishermen and used by the ancients for the selfsame purpose. They are called "aluruk" by the Eskimos. Also there were dark colored ivory plates that had once served as parts of suits of armor in the long forgotten past.

For untold centuries, within view of the Old World and the New, the Diomeders have led a hazardous existence on what are nothing more than two great piles of rocks. Throughout more than half of the year they are surrounded by the terrible turmoil of the mighty ice floes crushing and grinding their way through the nar-

row congested gateway of Bering Strait, which completely isolates them from all the rest of the world. Even during the periods when there is little or no ice around them, it is often impossible to land on or leave the islands for long periods on account of the terrific storms and "pea soup" fogs which add to the misery of living. It is a place where the dogs eat the bodies of the dead and the offal of the living; and where starvation stalks a frequent visitor. And yet, in spite of all their struggles to survive, the Diomeders are one of the hardiest and proudest of all the Arctic peoples. Even though the tiny islands are but two miles apart, they actually look upon each other as a separate and different people.

"We are Little Diomede people," one grizzled old native told us with open pride. "Little Diomede more better." And later: "We are Big Diomede people," one of their neighbors boasted emphatically. "Big Diomede more better."

Like two grim boundary sentinels these islands stand, so close together, marking the spot where the outposts of East and West come closest to meeting. They belong to different continents, different worlds. Big Diomede, about three square miles in area, is the eastern extremity of Siberia or Old World control; while Little Diomede, about one third the size of the former, is the farthest outpost of Alaska and New World territory. Here, in

winter when the two-mile channel is choked solid with ice, it is possible to walk from Asia to America or vice versa in about an hour. Even more interesting is the element of time, for if you leave Big Diomede on a Tuesday you will arrive at your destination on Little Diomede one hour later, on Monday or the day before you left; and returning on Tuesday you will arrive back home on Wednesday. This is due to the imaginary International Date Line which runs midway between the two islands! I asked the natives if this caused them any inconvenience in making appointments to visit their neighbors—but they only looked at me blankly, as if they thought I was crazy!

Little Diomede has for many years been synonomous with hazardous existence, starvation, primitiveness and Arctic paganism; and now that the opportunity was at hand for me to visit these people and gain first-hand knowledge of their obscure rites and customs, my first going ashore was accompanied with intense excitement and anticipation.

The natives had seemed a care-free friendly lot when they visited us on the schooner. But we received a somewhat different impression as we scrambled up over the slimy rocks of the shore in front of the village. Half-starved, wild-eyed dogs growled at us and slunk away; little fur-clad children went scurrying into the

den-like entrances of underground dwellings like so many young Arctic foxes; women hurried out of sight; and even some old men moved sullenly aside as if to avoid us. There was a distinct feeling that we were not altogether welcome.

It is not a large village, boasting only about one hundred and twenty-five souls in all—though Big Diomede has only about twenty. And as most of its dwellings are underground, it has scant external aspects of a village. The "main street" is nothing more than a muddy path, spotted with time-worn juttings of rocks, that zigzags along the hillside from one den-like abode to another.

Sitting on the wet ground in front of one of the *innies* was a small group of natives gathered around a peculiar looking object, about eighteen inches in diameter, from which they were slashing off hunks of meat that were devoured with an etiquette more animal than human. One of the natives was "Spike," a big sturdy young Eskimo who spoke a fair amount of white-man's talk. In his own pidgin-English he told us that the object of their feast was a walrus head that had been taken the previous winter and since then had lain buried in the ground and covered with rocks so that the dogs could not get at it until its owner decided to unearth it for a feast. The appearance of their tidbit was about as unappetizing as anything I could imagine, but the

odor was even worse, though they all seemed to be having a grand time eating it. Probably, at that, it was no worse than their custom of eating the partly digested clams taken from the stomach of a dead walrus.

"Spike" invited us into his innie, saying that he had some very old things to show me.

Crouching down I squirmed through the low, damp, malodorous passageway until at last a hole appeared over my head at the end of the tunnel. Standing upright, I found that the upper half of my body was inside the house.

My first impression was that of intense heat, heavy with unpleasant odors, and of an Eskimo woman hurriedly pulling a soiled calico dress over her head to hide the naked upper half of her body. A tiny naked baby lay upon a heap of reindeer skins, contentedly pawing the air with all four chubby hands and feet and cooing and gurgling in a strangely familiar fashion. But that alone was the only sign or aspect which seemed like anything I had ever seen or heard before.

Two big stone lamps filled with animal oil burned with wide orange flames at one side of the small dome-shaped room. It was unusually light inside, for in the center of the roof was a large window covered with the membrane from the stomachs of walrus. There were no chairs or other furnishings—only the oily boards on

which to sit, and piles of reindeer skins and bundles of fur clothing, with a few unwashed pots and pans piled to the side of one of the burning stone lamps. The ceiling was covered with sealskins and reindeer hides all sewed together in a crazy-patch design and coated almost beyond recognition with the smoke from the stone lamp and the oily steam from boiling meat pots.

Though sometimes several families live together in these doll-sized dwellings, they all sleep naked together between fur robes—and a remarkable tranquillity reigns. In fact, it was noticeable during the days we spent on these islands that there was not a single instance on which a native child was punished, nor any intimation of discord either within or between families.

The Diomede men, in general, have a primitive ruggedness of feature and physique, surprising in view of the privation and detrimental intermarrying which form an unavoidable factor in their lives; and they have the agility and strength that are requisite to their vigorous hunting pursuits. Some of the women, on the other hand, display an exotic grace and comeliness that is even more amazing. I remember one in particular whom we met in front of the den-like entrance to her home. "Spike" pointed her out as being the most beautiful on Little Diomede. Her features were so even and well formed that I guessed she had a large amount of

white man's blood in her veins, though my informer insisted very emphatically that she was 100 per cent Eskimo. And the papoose she carried on her back I supposed to be her first, but I learned that she was the mother of four others, the oldest of which was married. Certainly the burdens of a large family, the rigors of the Arctic climate, hard work, and privation had not faded her savage beauty.

These people are regarded, with good reason, even by their Eskimo neighbors, as being extremely barbaric. It is true that they have clannishly retained the ancient traditions and mystic rites of their earliest ancestors, and that they emphasize their insularity with an attitude of haughty aloofness.

The natives told us that according to Diomede tradition the first people who came to the islands settled on the top of Big Diomede. Here they were attacked by invaders, and although their own number comprised the merest handful, they cleverly managed to make the enemy believe that it was opposed by a considerable force. They erected a sham army of man-sized stone dummies, which they dressed in fur parkas. These silent soldiers formed what was perhaps the cheapest standing army on earth—and, if we are to believe tradition, the first standing army in this Northern threshold of the Western world. Moreover, some are still standing.

The Diomeders have always been fierce fighters. During recent years active hostility has abated, but this is no indication of a change in the Diomeder's disposition. One day "Spike" secretly showed us a hidden harpoon bomb—a device of destruction which explodes upon hitting any object and shatters it to bits. "Diomede us belong," he confided with a twinkle in his cold smoky eyes. "Me blow 'em up anybody come here." Later I learned that this was no idle chatter.

Time was when the Diomeders led plundering expeditions against their neighbors in Asia and America. Armed with the effective bow and arrow and armored by a hinged coat of mail tailored out of small ivory plates and strips of bone cut from the jaw of the whale, they were dangerous foes.

On the eve of a pillaging expedition the warriors engaged in an exercise which might have been mistaken for a limbering-up drill or a form of target practice. They would gather on the rocks and throw birds' eggs at the moon! They did it seriously, too, with all the ritual of solemn ceremony. For Tah-kukh, the goodwill of the Spirit of the Moon, had to be ingratiated. And since Tah-kukh was supposed to relish eggs with a true Diomeder's enthusiasm, this commodity was considered the price of success in the coming conflict.

In addition, a dog often was sacrificed and thrown

into the air; and one of the old men would stand by the water's edge and invoke the god of the earth, Seelah. And if the war party returned with loot in the form of furs, clothing and food, a small piece was cut from each plundered article and thrown skyward as a thank offering to the spirits. A similar ceremony was also observed when a group returned from a perilous though peaceful journey. This they would hold at the graves of their ancestors, being careful to give some of the food to the spirits of the dead.

The utter squalor and primitiveness in which these people live is almost inconceivable to a city dweller. Their food, for the most part, consists of the meat of seals, walrus, whales, fish, birds, and birds' eggs—most of which is eaten raw quite as often as it is cooked, and enjoyed in a state of semi-putrefaction quite as much as when fresh. They eat the lice picked from their own bodies; and like an animal cleaning her young, a Diomede mother will wash her infant's unsightly face by licking it with her tongue. After a meal it is common for an old woman to lick all the plates clean before putting them away. Yet, in spite of a complacent disregard of filth in most matters, a Diomeder will not drink water that has the least dirt in it.

An invitation to a Diomede dinner is something to be carefully considered—and diplomatically avoided. Their

idea of a feast is far from appetizing to a person of even modestly discriminating civilized taste. Some of the fare is palatable. The wild rhubarb, for instance, is comparable to the sort we know; and the potatoes, although they are stunted tubers about the size of marbles, are good enough when properly cooked. But after these . . . ! Eggs six months old or more, raw and probably in the final stages of decay or incubation; seal meat aged to a flavor which would cause an internal riot in any but an Eskimo's stomach; and ice cream made of very rancid seal oil beaten up with snow. For a special occasion they may serve a concoction which is prepared as follows: Reindeer suet is chewed until it is frothy with saliva; this is collected in a common bowl from the mouths of as many contributors as are available; rancid seal oil is added, and the whole mass is thoroughly mixed with the bare hands; and lastly wild berries are added to give flavor. No, I have not personally tasted this Arctic delicacy!

Of course, white man's foods are eaten when they can be procured; but the isolation of the Diomeders necessitates a very occasional indulgence in the contents of the white man's famous tin cans. In fact, I think they really prefer their own native foods.

Their communal or family tranquillity, in the face of such outstanding external handicaps, is a recommen-

dation for their moral code. Marriage among them is the simplest thing imaginable. There is no actual ceremony. A married woman neither changes her name nor wears any distinctive sign to indicate that she is a wife. In fact, one word, *nulleak,* means both wife and sweetheart. The bride simply goes to live in the innie of the groom's family, and thereafter they are considered married.

A fervent young suitor who is relatively wealthy may court his love with attentions and presents for as much as a year before she comes to live with him as his wife. Even the poorest young courter must give his bride-to-be as fine a parka as he can afford, and the girl in turn will make a fancy pair of mukluks for the boy's feet. Thereby she will demonstrate her skill as a seamstress as well as the strength of her teeth, for the tough *oogrook* sealskin soles of the boots must be crimped into shape and softened by chewing.

Marriage among these people is an economically well balanced union. The husband provides the food and the materials for clothing, and the wife prepares them for use. She must be able to make watertight boots and warm gloves and be able to tailor a rainproof parka out of the intestinal membrane of a walrus. She must make all her own thread out of sinew, whalebone, or seal throat. For her odd moments the husband may give her

a forty-foot harpoon line made of hard walrus hide to be softened by gradual chewing. She must also be equal to taking her own paddle and helping propel the family walrus-hide boat when they go to sea on a journey. If she is not proficient in all these tasks and equal to the hardships which are inevitably to be hers, she is not a desirable wife.

A divorce can be consummated with as little difficulty or formality as a marriage. The two parties just separate. But separations are very uncommon. These are generally the result of barrenness rather than the causes generally associated with our own divorce cases. But even this the Diomeders go to unique lengths to avoid.

If after a certain length of time there are no children born to a newly married couple, the husband in all propriety may ask a relative or friend to try for him. White men are sometimes asked. If, however, this does not produce the much desired offspring, they may go to some married relatives or friends and ask them to produce an heir for them, and when the baby is born they immediately take it to raise as their own. Male children are particularly desired; and I have been told that when only girls come into a family they have been known to make amazons of them occasionally.

A temporary trade of wives is sometimes practised and is never frowned upon by society.

I was somewhat startled to learn that the first nourishment which a Diomede mother gives her newly born after birth is a piece of raw walrus blubber. The mother of a boy will generally refrain from eating or drinking for some time after the baby's arrival, believing that by so doing it will influence his growing into a robust, hardy man.

There is little to keep the youngsters amused. Instead of going down to the corner store to buy a lollipop or candy, the boys and girls on these islands go down along the beach to eat the tender shoots of seaweed which the storms and tides leave clinging upon the water-worn slippery rocks. Or, for special amusement, the young Diomeder will often play for hours with a louse on a hair much as a civilized child will play with a toy clown or monkey on a string. In silent delight he will invert the hair as often as his infinitesimal gymnastic pet reaches the end, making it repeat the upward climb as though it were on a treadmill.

There are some rather strange incongruities in the Diomeder's attitude toward life and death. They have until recently practised a pagan custom of killing the aged people in their homes and villages, and yet they seem to have an intense fear and abhorrence of dying by drowning in the sea which has always been around them.

A very close friend of mine, who was for a number

of years a fur trader in that section of the world, once told me a very dramatic story which portrays the Eskimo's psychology better than anything I have ever heard. Stopping at a village on the mainland of Bering Strait, a young native came aboard his little schooner and asked if he might go on it to another village a short distance up the coast. En route the native was casually asked what his mission was at the village to which he was going. In his own dialect, and quite unemotionally, he replied: "I'm going up there to kill my father. He's very old—too old to hunt or trap any more. Last winter he sent word down to me that I should come up some time this summer and kill him. I'm his eldest son."

Thus, in this land where the struggle for existence is always so intense and where there is such a premium upon being equal to playing one's own part in the battle of life, there is no place for nonproducers or those who are a burden upon the family or the community. When the eyes grow too dim to see the seal a long way off and the body too weak to carry one through the hardships of the hunt or the trapping season, there is but one alternative—death. And the accepted mode is at the hands of one's own first-born or nearest of kin. It is a part of their religion, and it is accepted in an attitude of "Well, I've had my fling and I'm ready to quit." Generally the individual himself or herself is the

sole decider as to when such a time has arrived; they choose the person or persons who are to do the deed; and they select the method by which the execution shall be carried out—by hanging, being stabbed in the heart, or having stones piled upon them.

There seem to be no particular pangs or reluctance in facing such an ending, in spite of their intense fear of death by drowning. When an umiak of hunters is caught in a storm at sea and it is apparent that they cannot get back to land in safety, I have been told that it is customary for the man in charge of the hunting party to take out his sharp skinning knife, and one by one they come before him and put their chins up to have their throats slashed. Then lastly he cuts his own throat.

All of these customs seem strangely barbaric to anyone who has not lived with these people or learned to understand the price they pay for living—but to those few it is all a primitively glorified justice.

CHAPTER IX

BLACK MAGIC IN THE WHITE NORTH

MY PREVIOUS experience with Eskimos had taught me the necessity of caution and diplomacy when trying to pry into their private lives, traditional customs and mystic rites. The younger generation, for the most part, do not like to talk about the "old-time" practices and beliefs—for they look down with a certain amount of disdain on being associated with such things. The older people, on the other hand, usually resent the white man's curiosity, fearing that his inquiry or interest is merely for the purpose of making fun of the traditions which are still very near their hearts.

A close friend of mine, who is one of the few white men who have ever spent an entire winter on the Diomede Islands, had told me several years before of at-

tempting to crash the gate at one of their parties when a medicine man or *angutkok* was displaying his clandestine art. Despite the fact that this man was married to a full-blooded Eskimo and had been living among these people for almost a year, they seriously threatened his life when he attempted to remain after being told to get out of the place.

Little Diomede village boasts of one of the most famous angutkoks in all Alaska—one whose supernatural feats and uncanny journeys into the spirit world have gained him wide renown—at least among his own people in other parts of the North. And each time that I visited the settlement or an umiak load of natives came out to the *Morrissey,* I tried to pick out the individual who was the flesh and blood of this very unusual personage. Sometimes I thought that it might be one, sometimes another. Time after time I tried to decide upon some one of the natives whom I might question as to the famous angutkok's identity. At last, one morning when I was standing on the schooner's deck chatting with Spike, I broached the subject.

"Oh—angutkok?" he replied, with a quick inquiring glance at me. "Diomede angutkok great man—very great man! Do anything! Look—" and he pulled up the fur sleeve of his parka to display what appeared to be a perfectly normal forearm—"one time gun go off—

shoot um all to pieces." He jerked his arms upward to indicate a great explosion. "Shoot um this arm all to pieces. Yep. Blood run—everything. Diomede angutkok —this man—" and he pointed toward the Eskimo village on the tiny island opposite which our schooner was anchored to indicate that the individual about whom he was speaking now resided there—"he blow on um—like this—suck um little bit blood—say something—all well! No scar—see—all well! Oh! Diomede angutkok great man!"

Needless to say, I was duly impressed. With all the elaborate gesticulations and vehemence with which this Eskimo had expounded the marvelous powers of the native medicine man or angutkok of his village, I was even more anxious to look upon the gentleman in person.

I asked Spike if he would point out the angutkok. He nodded his head affirmatively, and our conversation drifted to another topic.

Later that same morning, as a big umiak was being paddled out from the shore toward the village, Spike came over to me and, pointing toward the approaching boat, announced that the medicine man was one of its passengers.

"Angutkok!" he half whispered. "See—in back—white parka—beside girl. Little Diomede angutkok."

I easily picked out the individual referred to and

watched him curiously as the boat came alongside and the natives climbed aboard with their little pokes of things which had been brought out to trade.

At first I was somewhat disappointed in this notorious personage. He was not a large man, even for an Eskimo. He was rather thin and wrinkled. He was dressed in a plain parka made of white reindeer skins and fancy new mukluks that had evidently been worn in honor of the visit. But, eyeing him closely, I became aware of a certain severe autocracy in his demeanor and movements. Somehow he began to impress me as a good actor, if nothing else. Though the most outstanding feature of his appearance, I must confess, which both amazed and fascinated me, was the absence of a large part of his nose.

"Great man!" I whispered to the Eskimo beside me, in an effort to convince him of my serious belief and respect for the angutkok. "How come nose cut off?"

At first Spike was reticent. I sensed a slight embarrassment or reluctance to answer the question, though this only the more keenly aroused my curiosity.

"Maybe—in fight with evil spirit?" I questioned, throwing caution and diplomacy to the winds.

"No!" he grunted a bit abruptly. "Wife bite um off!"

This was really a far more human and worldly explanation than I had anticipated. I had really expected

some sort of story more in keeping with the angutkok's character. But I was later assured that my informer had told me the truth, although I also learned that the subject was a rather embarrassing one not only to the individual himself but to the rest of the Diomede natives as well. I did not inquire as to whether or not the wife's action had been an extravagant variation of the Eskimo gesture of affection—rubbing noses—or whether it was traceable to connubial discord. I did, however, ask if his wife was still living, to which I received the blunt reply: "No—she dead!"

While the facts of this case assured me of the mortality of the Eskimo angutkok, it left me in an even greater quandary as to an explanation of his uncanny powers.

Bit by bit, by careful inquiry, I pieced together the curious story of this Arctic sorcerer and added the information to what I had previously learned about the other exponents of his cult in the North.

The angutkok on Little Diomede Island is one of the most despotic rulers of human destinies on all the earth. He is a pagan czar, with an even greater power and influence in the community than the chieftain. In the eyes of his people he is absolutely invulnerable. All are humbled before him and the forces of his spirit world, over which he has absolute control. Sickness and health, good

and bad luck, the complicated workings of nature, life and death, everything real and unreal, are supposedly always subject to his whim and command.

It is claimed, and in all seriousness, that he "changes his life" every so often. To accomplish this he stabs a knife into his heart (old style), or shoots a rifle bullet through his heart (new style), and falls down dead. Blood spurts forth and pours from his mouth to cover his body. Then after a short while he begins to regain consciousness. With spasmodic convulsions and walrus-like grunts he slowly starts to breathe. A new life or spirit has been born in his body. In a little while he gets to his feet and goes about as though nothing had happened to him. According to the serious belief of his people, he can perform this feat as often as he chooses; and it is, to him, like nothing more than changing an old suit of fur clothing for a brand-new one.

Not only is the angutkok impervious to knife and gun, but he can, by his magic, even survive a hanging. Ten or twenty minutes' vacation to the land of spirits is all that he seems to experience from his execution.

This dictatorship over life and death also extends to other persons upon whom he may desire to work his charms. For instance, if a native has a very violent pain in his abdomen he can go to the angutkok for treat-

ment. To cure the ailment he is said to cut the patient's body wide open, remove the affected organs much as one might take apart a mechanical contrivance, clean them thoroughly, then replace them and send the patient away completely relieved of all his pain! I did not, I must confess, even ask to see a demonstration of this or any other of his unbelievable accomplishments.

I was also told that this angutkok is capable of inducing sickness. The instrument of his evil influence is a small spindle-shaped talisman of ivory, polished but uncarved. To work the trick he will mutter a malediction over the little object, fling it out into the winter darkness, and the spell is cast. Some individual in the village is inevitably doomed to become ill—and then the angutkok will cure him and claim his fee. Probably the powers of that little spindle-shaped ivory talisman are invoked at such times when business is not particularly good. I tried very hard to procure one of these business getters, as I felt that if all which was claimed for them was true, they might be in demand by more civilized practitioners. But while I was able to bargain for some of his other forms of "medicine," no price would tempt the sorcerer to part with his little spindle.

I was particularly fortunate in being able to procure one of this angutkok's priceless medicine kits. How I

ever inveigled him into parting with it is still something of a mystery to me. To get him to tell me of some of the feats of which he was capable had really exceeded my serious expectations; but to have him part with any of the paraphernalia which he used in these accomplishments, was good luck indeed. The kit was contained in an age-worn, elliptical-shaped box about fifteen inches long and no doubt made several generations before from driftwood found on the beach. Its contents consisted of the complete mummified bodies of two sea birds (murres), encased in walrus intestine and decorated with fur; the very old mummified head of a large bird of still unidentified species; several peculiarly shaped designs of artificially colored furs of various animals; a polar bear's tooth on which some strange designs had been carved; a small Russian bell dated 1816; and a number of small articles such as bits of crudely shaped ivory carvings and old Russian glass beads.

Just what each article was used for I did not learn; though I was told that with this kit the old angutkok could cure everything from toothache to smallpox.

These are only a few examples of the many remarkably mysterious feats in the medicine man's repertoire. His people believe implicitly in the reality of each one. There are even on Diomede, of course, the younger generation skeptics; and in many of the other Eskimo vil-

lages which have been in prolonged contact with the white man the angutkok has ceased to do business except on rare occasions. Even in such places the older natives will still sincerely vouch for the authenticity of his feats.

"I see it—my own eyes!" I have often had the natives tell me in all seriousness—and I believe they were telling the truth.

There is an explanation, of course, and like that for most mysterious phenomena, it is quite simple. I have never actually witnessed an angutkok doing his stuff. I know but a single white man who has intruded on one of their demonstrations; and even that man did not see any of the feats accomplished. Yet I think I know the explanation.

The Diomede Islands are the outstanding stronghold of this cult. So let us view first the unusual stage upon which these magical acts are played. The setting is peculiarly perfect. The islands are nothing more than two very barren rocky peaks jutting up in the center of Bering Strait, one of the stormiest pieces of water on all the earth. To the north stretches the unfriendly Arctic Ocean and the Polar ice pack; to the south is the stormy Bering Sea and the great Pacific extending unbroken, save for a few scattered islands, until it reaches the Antarctic. Storm and sea have virtually an unimpeded sweep

from pole to pole, with all their turbulent wrath and intensity converged by the two great continents as into the tiny neck of a gigantic funnel, the point where the islands lie.

Throughout most of the summer the section is shrouded in heavy murky fogs almost as dense as smoke, or torn by terrific gales that lash the sea into murderous havoc. Throughout the winter the great fields of floating ice that cover the center of the Arctic top of the earth jam through the narrow gateway between the two continents like a vast herd of stampeding prehistoric mammoths, all struggling to surge through a narrow rocky canyon at the same time. The power of the universe is behind the ice. Great bergs are literally ground to snow. The ridges and moraines creep and twist like a serpentine thing alive, and moan and groan like a creature in the throes of death. The power of it appears to be irresistible. Yet the two little Diomede Islands for many centuries have proudly raised their barren rocky heads in the very center of it, where its power is the greatest, boldly to defy it.

It is really a land of winter, for in winter all its forces are at their best. Clear skies, dimmed by the shades of twilight and night that knows neither sun nor moon, throw a great translucent dome of polished aquamarine from the distant rim of the snow-white horizon in any

direction the eye may look. In the south gleams the periodic golden glow of a spotlight that never quite lights up the scene; and from the north come the brilliant displays of pale colored lights that creep and shoot in straight shafts and graceful curves to the zenith overhead. The setting is changed only when a snow blizzard sweeps across the jagged icy floor.

This, in short, is the stage upon which the Eskimo angutkok works his unholy miracles.

And now let us look a little closer at the personalities of both the magician and his supporting cast before undertaking to view his *fantoccini* from back stage.

Completely isolated as the Diomeders have been for almost the entirety of the long line of generations that they have made the islands their home, an unavoidable intermarrying has linked virtually every family with all the rest. To this entanglement of connubial relations has been added a sanctioning of less formal human relations. The resulting situation is one great tribal family, in the truer sense of the word, welded solidly together not only by mutual blood, but through ceaseless companionship in hardship and suffering as well.

The Diomeders live an isolated life of unusual intensity and precarious existence from birth to death. When they die they are carried out to be laid naked on the rocks behind the village and torn to pieces and devoured

by their half-starved dogs; and most of the span between these two extremes in the Diomeders' life is quite in keeping.

Nearly everything that these people do has some superstitious significance associated with it. Boys wear the tail of a wolf fastened to the back of their parkas so that they will grow up to be swift runners. Nor is the son of a critical family permitted to have his hair cut until he has killed something. Thus his advent into the all-important field of hunting is started at a very early age. As soon as he is able to pull a small bow or throw a sling, he goes out in quest of the sea birds which nest in untold myriads on the island—and this is the price of a first haircut on the Diomede Islands.

A father will proudly preserve the first animal that his offspring kills, and if the son should die he will destroy the trophy in the anguish of his bereavement.

There was one boy on Little Diomede, when I was there, whose marksmanship was pathetically handicapped by a bad case of crossed eyes. He was quite a sizeable lad, yet he had not been able to win the previous right to a haircut. Nearly every day he could be seen striving diligently and vainly to bring down one of the birds that swarmed on the rocky cliffs—with his long black locks of hair stuffed in embarrassment inside the neck of his

parka. Even the expression on his father's face was one of sadness. He still wore long hair when I left.

Whenever a young man kills his first walrus, there is much elation and congratulating. Ceremoniously he presents the tusks to an old man and makes smaller gifts of tobacco and pieces of skin to others. They are one and all a most superstitious people.

Precariously the Diomeders are generally teetering between starvation and the barest of living. With good luck they have food, but the smallest streak of bad luck may mean disaster. A spell of unfavorable weather may spoil their hunting and force them to kill their dogs for food. Regularly these unfortunate mishaps result in the death of numbers of people—keeping the population cut down to a figure proportionate to the food supply. This situation, abetted by their natural superstition, has given rise to a deep belief in the efficacy of the angutkok's influencing charms, and in individual amulets. I have had a native show me a blue bead about the size of a marble for which he had traded a whaleboat, and only laughed at me when I asked him if he would sell it for a hundred dollars. It was probably worth not more than a few cents.

To bring success in sealing he may wear a thong around his neck and under his left armpit, on which is tied a bunch of five curious stones or crystals sewed onto

a leather tab. Another charm for a successful catch of seals is a tuft of wolverine hair suspended between the shoulder blades from a strand about the neck.

Even the equipment must be protected against bad luck. When an umiak or skin boat is launched for the first whale hunting trip of the season, it is thoroughly scoured in order to clean out any malicious spirits that may have taken refuge there. All particularly tenacious spirits that will not yield to this treatment are put to flight by the smoke of a small ceremonial fire built under the inverted craft. The paddles and oars must also be purified by scraping and cleaning. Then, before the boat is allowed to go out to sea, the villagers must spend a morning in song. When all this is accomplished the real hunting ceremony begins, and the boat is ready to be launched for the hunt.

Three persons must wear brand-new clothing for the final launching: the chief harpooner, the steersman, and one woman who plays an important part in the ritual. The woman walks in front of the boat to the edge of the ice, wearing a long string of beads made of crab's claws. There she removes the beads, and under no circumstances will she put them on again until the hunters return with game. At the water's edge she sits in the bow of the boat and goes through the graceful gyrations of an Eskimo dance. Then, at a signal, two or three boys

race out to her, and to the winner she gives a prize of some article of food.

As soon as the people on the shore see that the boat has harpooned and killed a whale, every umiak on the beach is launched, and there is a strenuous race to reach it first. The catch is divided according to the order in which the boats arrive—after, of course, the hunters have taken the choicest portions.

But before the great leviathan of the Arctic sea is towed in and cut up in front of the village it is given a "drink" of fresh water so that when its spirit flies to the place where all good animal spirits go, it will carry with it a favorable report regarding the people who killed it. The Diomeder will even give his umiak a drink of water.

The funeral customs of the natives reveal their superstitions even more strongly. In the ceremonies prescribed for such occasions there is none of the sentimentality which marks a burial in civilized, and indeed most primitive, lands. Whatever sorrow the bereaved may feel is largely caused by a fear that the spirit of the deceased may not be disposed of effectually enough and may return to haunt and molest the relatives.

A dead body is never carried from a dwelling through the door. It must be hoisted through the skylight, and feet first. The exit from its earthly home is made as topsy-turvy and bewildering as possible, so that the

spirit will have little chance of finding its way back. And instead of hanging flowers on the doorway of the house, as is our custom, the relatives smear it with a vile smelling liquid that is intended to repulse the spirit should it return. A certain bone from the skeleton of a walrus is also placed at the door still further to discourage a possible return.

Even after their dwelling is rendered practically immune from the now malicious spirit, the mourners remain huddled in timid refuge for five days if the death has been that of a woman and four if a man. During this time they must wear their parkas inside out and keep their gloves on. They believe that if they go out they will become deaf, and not even clothing can be hung out of doors, for that might bring bad weather. And if they use a certain adz-like pick (one of the common native implements) that would bring upon one of them some hideous disease.

The clothing of the dead person is considered unclean and is thrown to the dogs. These creatures are continually in a state of semi-starvation and devour the skin garments greedily.

The trellised wooden shelf which the deceased used to store his sleeping skins or blankets during the daytime serves as his bier. The corpse is stretched out on this,

naked except for a small loincloth in the case of a woman, and is then placed on the rocks a short distance above the village. In order that the evil spirit cannot leave the body, the eyes are closed and each one is covered with a piece of moss.

Soon the ravenous dogs that wander about the village, searching for bits of food and human offal, find the bodies and tear them to pieces amid canine battles.

But in spite of all these ingenuous precautions to keep the spirits of the dead from returning, they are supposedly always wandering about. Any Diomeder will tell you stories about the ghosts he has seen stalking through the village. In the long winter twilight specters may be glimpsed silhouetted against the glowing doorway of an innie, or dwelling, or outlined against the quivering aurora in the sky. Sometimes it capers back and forth; sometimes it dances in a kind of ecstasy; sometimes it threatens with the sinister gestures of a thwarted soul seeking revenge for the inadequate supply of food and implements that have been left beside the grave to serve its needs in the realm of death. If it is the ghost of someone who has been drowned, it will appear dripping with water and garlanded with seaweed, complaining about the meager gifts deposited at the special necropolis of those who have been lost at sea.

On these fearful occasions even the dogs are affected. They howl and whine and slaver at the mouth. And the cutting north wind, whistling down over the expanse of ice which stretches clear to the pole, rages with an unnatural fury, chilling the body and numbing the courage of every awestruck native. For his fear of the supernatural grips him relentlessly. It is reflected in his face as he tells about these strange happenings and dire portents in which he believes but which he cannot understand.

Even as he talks, he casts a furtive glance toward the dreary area behind the village where the bones of his ancestors lie scattered and where the malevolent spirits of the dead are ever waiting to bring him misfortune. He may be one of the island's most indomitable hunters, who has come to grips with every natural force and hazardous pursuit in the Arctic and emerged undaunted. But, nevertheless, he quickly changes the conversation to another topic. It is his religion—the pagan power before which he bows with most fervent, unrestrained supplication and submission—and the angutkok is his own living Allah, Buddha or Baal.

The Arctic medicine man is a wise magician. He knows full well the deep-rooted grip which he holds upon his people. Yet he will not attempt any of his weird plays except under ideal conditions. His audience must

be in a sympathetic psychological mood, and the stage must be properly set. He connives with nature to provide the effects.

It is generally in winter—polar winter. There is death in the freezing air. The white of the earth and blue of the sky have a sullen monotony, and the heavy tenseness of the isolation (which produces madness among white men and dogs) leads the Eskimo's imaginative mind to race in fantastic sympathy with mystery and superstition.

All around the Diomedes the ice is grinding its way through Bering Strait. Great towering bergs are ground to bits and disappear. There are the boom and mumble and groan resulting from the terrific forces of ice and sea—the noise of spirit hosts at play or at battle.

The heavens are aglow with the weird display of the northern lights—now fading away, now flaring boldly to seer the sky like the licking flames from some monstrous pagan altar of the gods. Simply to watch them, and to listen to their faint drone, is enough to fill the most sophisticated with uncontrollable awe and fear. Anyone who has seen and felt it, no matter how material he may be, can well imagine the superstitious grip which this alone must have upon the native. They will not even whistle in its presence, for fear that their heads will be snatched off by some unseen power.

This is the stage, and the curtain is raised. Though still behind the scenes the wily angutkok instigates a dance—and there is no dance on earth like the dances of the Eskimos.

They gather in the largest available dwelling or shelter for the occasion. It is close and stuffy. A sufficient number of big oil-burning stone lamps to overheat the place are burning. These cast weird shadows about, lighting in oblique perspective the tense faces of the participants.

The first dance may be one in which the women and girls do the acting. They arrange themselves in sitting posture along one side. The drummers sit facing them and carefully tune their skin-covered drums by rubbing a human liquid upon the taut coverings. Then the leader calls out a signal, and the wildly syncopated thumping begins, accompanied by the lusty chanting of the orchestra and of those in the audience whom the spirit has already moved. That the drum music is peculiarly wild may be guessed from the fact that it is, according to their folklore, an imitation of the thumping of a gigantic heart upon the bony ribs of one of the Eskimo's traditional super spirits.

After the music and spasmodic chanting have progressed for a few minutes the dancers begin to move

their bodies slowly to the rhythm. Then at a signal from the leader they launch intently into the dances.

Each dance is the interpretation of a scene in a folklore story. Each dancer's movements and chanting are in perfect chorus with all the rest. The movements are a conventionalized pantomime portrayal of the story they are chanting; and the chanting is a poetic narration of the scene.

As the dance progresses the vehemence gradually increases. The dancers' arms are raised and lowered and swung with all the tense vim they can possibly put into the movements, and they vocally expound the oft-repeated story with such intensity that the muscles and veins in their necks and faces eventually stand out as if they were about to burst; beads of perspiration trickle unnoticed down their flushed countenances, and their eyes become wild with a distant vacant stare. Gradually they work themselves into a high state of mental hysteria.

There is no great length of time between dances. Another episode is begun before they have had any opportunity to lose the mental pitch to which the dance has already carried them. If the first has been a very popular song, it may be repeated.

By this time the dancers, orchestra, and audience have begun to remove some of their clothing, owing to

the heat of the stone lamps and the radiation from human bodies in the congested airtight room. Soon most of them will be naked from the waist up.

After the women have expounded several of the episodes, some of the men may take the floor. Their dances are even more spasmodic. They dance about, jumping and squatting and flinging their arms, and almost burst the drum-like room with their violent shouts.

I have witnessed a number of these dances, and on several occasions I have caught myself becoming mentally intoxicated with their wild primitive grip—wanting to break loose and enter into the syncopated shouting and dancing. For the natives themselves it must be maddening.

The dances usually last for many hours. Often they extend for several days. Sometimes some of the participants will drop in a coma brought on by sheer physical and mental collapse and will have to be dragged outside into the frigid air to be revived.

Now, if the spirit moves him, the angutkok will take the stage. He may decide that the act will be a flight to distant lands to hold council with the ancestral spirits of the Other World. Or it may be one of the acts which I have already mentioned.

One of the chief properties of this little flying-away act is a pair of white bearskin pants which are suspended

above the angutkok well out of reach. As soon as he begins his journey these pants are to become the wings that carry him through the ether.

He is bound with thongs in a doubled-up position, his neck tied against his knees, and his arms secured behind his back, with the wrists lashed to the elbows. Then the oil-burning stone lamps are extinguished, and in the black darkness the wizard begins his act.

There is a soft whirring as of furry wings carrying a heavy body into flight. Suddenly the angutkok's voice is heard. It chants in wavering, mysterious tones, for already he is talking with the spirits of the dead. Slowly the voice recedes, until it seems to hang far off in midair, although still audible to the ears of the gaping audience. Detached from all earthly vestiges, the thin voice holds council with those of the Other World—learns wisdom and seeks advice upon important topics which seriously affect the listeners and the village. A clever trick of ventriloquism? Perhaps—but there is more to it than that. For when the voice returns to its mortal body and the order is given to relight the lamps, our primitive wizard is seen still doubled up on the floor in his original bonds, but wearing the bearskin pants on his fettered arms!

This power of conversation with the ancestral spirits is one of the angutkok's strongest holds upon his public,

because of the tremendous influence which the spirits exert over their lives. The Diomeders' attitude toward them is more than one of wholesome respect. It is fear. They can send down either good or bad luck, and usually elect the latter—because bad luck and misfortune are more prevalent in their own daily lives! And the angutkok is the only one who has the audacity as well as the power to seek their good favor.

The audience for these acts is always in this mental state of religious hysteria to which is added a deep-rooted belief that the wise old wizard is capable of any supernatural feat he may want to accomplish. That he is very clever in his selections and performances is unquestioned; and that he has a chosen accomplice who is ultimately to carry on the cult unto the next generation, is equally certain.

Like all primitive (or Broadway) magicians the earth over, the angutkok guards the secrets of his cult most religiously. His feats are not for alien eyes to see, nor unsympathetic ears even to hear about. That would be sacrilege. And probably even more important—it might deprive him of an easy livelihood.

The Diomeders want most to be left alone. They are complacently unaware that their tiny island refuge is but an infinitesimal speck in the great world. The pomp and power of empires is wholly beyond their compre-

hension; the outside world no more than a vague rumor with less reality than their own fantastic myths or mystic feats of their angutkok. They are their own masters, unhampered by any outside alliance.

"Diomede more better," is their ever ready retort to a mention of the allurements of the outside world; to which is sternly added: "Diomede us belong. Maybe blow um up anybody come here stay."

That the last statement is said in all seriousness may be surmised from an incident which occurred at the nearest native village on the mainland. A certain white man settled there for the purpose of changing their religious and other views. The natives did not like the manner in which he undertook his mission. So they complacently got out one of their explosive whale guns and on a dark night took it to his dwelling. Arranging the weapon on the ground, they lined it up with an ace of hearts playing card that was quietly fastened on the door at a point about where the man's heart would be when he stood in the doorway. Then, knocking, they quietly waited until the door was opened. The gun was fired, and the unfortunate intruder fell at the feet of his wife with the big iron harpoon driven clear through his body. And those particular people are considered mild and friendly in comparison to the Diomeders.

To visit them now in their isolated little domain is like

turning back the pages of time beyond the dawn of history, but slowly and surely the ways of the white man will some day obliterate all their romantic background. The angutkoks will be nothing more than individuals without an occupation; the boom and moan of the ice in its unchanged yearly struggle will be only a menacing noise; and the mystic northern lights nothing more than a phenomenon of clear winter weather. And what a pity it will be when that time comes!

CHAPTER X

ON THE ICY TRAIL OF AIVIK

OF ALL the weird places visited by man there is none more inhospitable than the Arctic ice north of Bering Strait and the coast of Siberia; and of all the big creatures still living on the face of the earth, none is more grotesquely interesting or comes nearer to being a hold-over from the long forgotten age of mammalian monstrosities than the great pudgy walrus.

To seek these leviathans of the Far North in their own haunts is in many respects like stepping suddenly back into one of the early eras of the earth. The great expanse of ever-shifting, always-menacing polar ice pack is one where man is to-day about as helpless and insignificant as he was at the dawn of his epoch. With all his highly developed facilities and all his wisdom he cannot construct a conveyance capable of withstanding

its crushing power. Every vessel that goes into that icy labyrinth is piloted there with the knowledge that it is courting catastrophe and that no other section of the earth has claimed a higher percentage of the adventurers who have challenged its dangers.

Originally the walrus, or "sea cow" as it was called by the early writers, was exceedingly plentiful on both sides of our continent. As late as the latter part of the eighteenth century they were found in great numbers on our Atlantic seaboard even as far south as the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where they were killed mainly for the oil and leather which they supplied. At one particular place on the Magdalene Islands they are said to have been hauled out to the number of "seven or eight thousand," and were killed "with the assistance of good dogs," by the use of a "spear sharp on one side, with which the hunters cut their throats." And in this manner fifteen or sixteen hundred were killed at a single time before the herd could get back into the water.

Until comparatively recent years they were hunted commercially in the Arctic waters north of Siberia and Alaska. The size of the hunter's vessel and its capacity for carrying the hides were the only determining factors in the number taken. To-day they are a comparatively scarce creature, for while now they are rarely

sought by commercial hunters, the Eskimos hunt them diligently.

The American Museum of Natural History did not have a single mounted specimen, let alone a group of them. This fact is not so much due to the scarcity of the creatures as to the technical care which the tremendous hides require so that they can be utilized for mounting purposes. We had one of the museum's best preparators with us, Mr. Andrew Johnstone, and every required facility to care for the heavy hides. So it was naturally with the greatest concern that we entered upon this very important stage of procuring suitable specimens —that of actually finding and collecting them. And the result of our efforts in this respect is one of the most pretentious groups in the new Hall of Ocean Life in the museum.

There was a glorious feeling of impending adventure as we sailed away from the Diomede Islands, that stormy gateway to the mystic Arctic, and skirted the forbidden north coast of Siberia on a course toward Wrangel Island, in the Arctic ice. The *Morrissey* had already journeyed more than ten thousand miles to bring us to the realization or disappointment, the success or disaster, which now was not far ahead.

A large school of whales sported ahead of the boat, rolling their monster black backs out of the water,

spouting geysers of white spray-like vapor high into the air, and lifting their great sail-like flukes above the surface as they sounded to feed. A haze hung like a veil over the rugged Siberian coast. Ahead, we knew not how far, lay the polar ice; and somewhere, lying languidly on the blue-white floes, were the walrus which we hoped to find.

For four days we sailed northwest, with a fair wind bending the *Morrissey's* big sails. Then, white and threatening, the polar ice reached out its frozen finger tips to receive us. This marked the beginning of a ceaseless vigil for the safety of our ship and ourselves, as well as the locating of game.

"Pretty soon *aivik!*" we were confidently assured by the Eskimo hunters we had picked up at Little Diomede Island for this part of our expedition. All eyes were alert for walrus. Every pair of binoculars on the boat was directed at any suspicious dark blotch on the pans of floating ice through which we were soon zigzagging our way. We wanted the best specimens of those ponderous creatures that the Arctic herds afforded, to represent permanently our expedition in the museum.

Climbing to the big barrel at the top of the schooner's high foremast, I gazed with awe at the slowly shifting bergs and sparkling gaps of sea. Ahead of me stretched the vast interminable vista of blue and white, unbroken

to the polar horizon, and merging there into the cold gray of the Arctic sky.

The calls of "port" and "starboard" were intermittently boomed down to the man at the wheel, who called back the orders as he spun the big wheel and guided the ship's course along jagged-edged lane-ways that led through the maze of floating obstacles. Every now and then the iron-barked bow of the *Morrissey* would smash into a great hulk of ice, and the schooner would shiver from keel to masthead. Then, unperturbed, she would plow on.

Day after day we maneuvered and bumped our way through the ice pack. Sometimes we ran into snowstorms. Sometimes a dense fog settled around us, and we were compelled to tie up to a big growler of ice, to keep from wandering into a "jack pot," from which there would be no escape. Nearly every day the temperature was below freezing, and furs and heavy woollens were required for comfort.

On one night our wireless informed us that New York City had been sweltering through the hottest day of the summer, with the thermometer registering ninety-seven degrees. That same day it had been twenty-six degrees on the deck of the *Morrissey*—every rope aglitter with frost and a coating of ice on the bow.

We were seriously handicapped in locating the wal-

rus by not having got through Bering Strait until after the ice had moved well north into the Arctic and become much scattered along an irregular margin. The best time to hunt these creatures is in the early part of the season, just after the ice moves north of Bering Strait, or late in the season when the ice has crowded down almost to the Strait. For at these times the game is generally found along the compact edge of the pack. During the middle of the summer, however, it is like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack, to locate them.

Our plans had been very carefully formulated, but a broken propeller shaft frustrated our aim to go through the Strait close in the wake of the ice (usually the second week in July). As evidence of the wisdom of our original plan, a lone commercial hunting schooner had gone through, found game, and returned with something like two hundred and ninety-six walrus heads and hides before we could even get into the Arctic.

At last we were winding our way through the ice close to Herald Island, which is only about thirty-five miles eastward from Wrangel. It was clear weather, and the barren rocky cliffs of the island stood out boldly against their icy setting.

Conditions other than the weather were bad in the vicinity. We were unable to get closer than about four

miles. The ice floes were continually jamming together, and so Captain Bartlett turned the vessel back toward the southeast to get out of the heavy pack and then swing up to the northeast.

Day after day we bumped our way through the jaws of the ice pack. Sometimes we had snowstorms. Sometimes a dense fog settled around us. Every day was freezing cold. We kept fairly close to the edge of the ice pack, for it is along the edge that one is most apt to find walrus. But the prevailing winds had been from the northwest, and this had resulted in the ice becoming much scattered out into the open sea. Instead of a comparatively even edge for us to follow in our search for game, we had to zigzag back and forth through from two to ten or more miles of scattered ice.

Our new course took us to a point approximately two hundred and twenty-five miles northwest of Point Barrow, well up into the black or unexplored area. We saw a few scattered individual walrus and gave chase to a couple. But soon we abandoned bothering with anything but a herd—and no herd was to be found. At last we decided to return to the vicinity of Wrangel and Herald islands.

One clear crisp morning on our return course the thrilling cry was bellowed from the crow's nest: "Walrus! Walrus!"

All hands rushed toward the bow of the *Morrissey*, and everyone became alert to catch a glimpse of the elusive quarry.

A great brown head rose out of the cold blue water ahead of the boat, and a pair of big white tusks gleamed as a snorting creature rolled over and disappeared.

"Full speed ahead!" ordered Captain Bob.

The race was on. Again the big head rose, and again the great white tusks flashed enticingly as the walrus rolled over. We glided past jagged points of big bergs that raked and ground against the ship's sides and made it tremble with the impact, and across tranquil openings toward seemingly impassable abutments of more ice.

At last we came to a long and unbroken line of ice through which it was impossible for the *Morrissey* to follow any farther. Disappointment settled on us as the order was bellowed down to turn the ship around, and the man on duty twirled the wheel hard over.

But as the boat swung we were startled by another sudden cry from one of the Eskimos.

"Walrus! Plenty walrus!"

What a sight now greeted us! Less than a hundred yards away was a large pan of ice literally jammed with the monster creatures which we had been seeking so diligently. And we had run right onto them.

"Hard aport!" came the brusque order, more quietly;

whereupon the *Morrissey* swung to starboard and moved off to a safe distance. And as we moved away we also sighted another and slightly smaller bunch of walrus on another ice pan farther on. It looked as though this was the day for which we had been waiting.

By the time our ship had got to a place where the animals would not be disturbed we had guns, harpoons, cameras, and the two power-launches in readiness. The small boats were lowered, their engines started, and back we went.

As we drew closer the motors were throttled down to make the least possible noise. Two hundred yards—and their gleaming white tusks and grotesque shapes could be distinguished. One hundred yards—still they had not noticed us. Fifty yards—and we began to get restless and eye each other questioningly. Like creatures of a prehistoric age they loomed ponderously in front of us; tons of fatty bodies, strangely wrinkled, gleaming ivory tusks protruding at all angles. They were huddled together like so many gigantic puppies. Most of them were motionless—asleep. Others moved their enormous heads lazily. They seemed to realize that they were many hundreds of miles from the nearest habitation of even an Eskimo hunter.

Here and there among them, we now noticed, lay their young—ridiculous miniature replicas of their parents.

This was unusual luck for us, for females with young are the most difficult to find and were the most necessary part of our museum group. And what a movie it made!

One hundred feet! The engine was stopped. Fifty feet! We were going right up onto them. My heart beat fast.

"Pick your animals," I whispered almost breathlessly as I continued to crank off a motion picture record of the unusual scene, and Merle and Charlie Stoll raised their rifles.

Then suddenly an ugly head with rapier-like tusks rose high above the huddled mass. Two tiny eyes glared at us questioningly for a moment. The boat swung quietly broadside. Then the sudden crash of a heavy rifle shattered the silence.

The whole herd instantly became a squirming mass. The cold air rang with their deep-toned bellowings of alarm and defiance. One after another they slipped over the edge into the water, each bulky beast throwing a wake that rocked our boat. Great dark bodies glided like shadows of sharks in the blue depths beneath us. Two remained motionless on the ice.

Then up they began to come in a bunch. Every one was faced toward us, their glistening ivory tusks, tiny

eyes and grotesque bewhiskered faces giving them a most uncanny appearance. Bellowing lustily and snorting fine sprays of water into the air they had almost the appearance of whales. What a sight it was!

Our boat was headed straight for the churning maelstrom and in a few moments we were directly in their midst. Heads the size of barrels, wrinkled and barnacled, with tusks as large as baseball bats, reared up alongside the boat; and the spray from their throats and nostrils actually wet us.

Mothers and young had become separated, and the former defiantly stood their ground. Two of them made lunges at our boat, their heavy tusks striking the sides with an impact that seemed heavy enough to splinter the planks. One of these came up in the very churn of our propeller with the apparent intention of making a second attack from the rear. I stopped my picture taking long enough to grab my rifle and put a bullet in its throat—not more than eight feet from the end of my gun. The boat was swerved about, and the Eskimo in the bow sank a harpoon in the creature's back before it sank out of sight.

Charlie and Merle Stoll had each picked fine specimens of full-grown animals. We now picked three young ones for the group and decided we had enough.

The *Morrissey* was signaled to come in, and as it veered toward us we began collecting the harpoon-line floats and towing the submerged animals toward the floe where they could be tethered until hoisted aboard.

They were taken onto the schooner's deck *in toto*—and how they filled it! Nor was it an easy matter to take care of them. Block and tackle and engine power were required to move even the skins after being removed. Complete measurements were made, and even the skeletons of most of the animals were preserved. No care or pains was spared in these initial stages that were to lead to their ultimate preservation in a life-like group in the museum.

But still we had the bulls to locate to complete the group; and once again the patient vigil was begun from deck and crow's nest.

Nothing but ice, ice, ice. From July 28th to September 4th, we did not set foot on land of any kind. The weather turned dirty and stayed dirty for weeks! It snowed and it blew, and it blew and it snowed, with thick pea-soup fogs for added variety.

The only diversion which we had from walking the deck and climbing the rigging of our little vessel was when we tied up to some great green iceberg to replenish our supply of water from the purified pools on its surface, or to wait for a fog to lift. On these occa-

sions we would take to the ridges and valleys of the icy island like a covey of ducks a long time away from water. Even my ludicrous English bulldog, Tough, would "go native" at these times and waltz about over the slippery surface like a baby polar bear on a lark.

We cruised in a zigzag course for more than fifteen hundred miles through the ice and had found but a single herd of cows and young walrus. Strong winds from the northwest had gradually been pushing the whole polar pack down toward the Siberian coast. The indications were that we had better make a run for Bering Strait to get out before the gateway to the Arctic was closed and locked for the season.

"Things look pretty bad," advised Captain Bob. "It's a bad year. The big stuff is 'way down. We'd better get farther south, for if the western ice and the eastern ice come together down below us—we're here for the winter."

We started south at once, for if any living person knows ice conditions it is Captain Bartlett.

He put the *Morrissey* on a southerly course for a point on the Siberian coast about two hundred miles west of the Strait, and we reluctantly pulled out of the pack. A veritable gale of wind pushed us along. The seas rolled up behind us mountain high, and the schooner swung and tossed as it rose to their churning crests and sank

into their blue-green galleys. The combers periodically rushed over the deck; and the man at the wheel was lashed fast with a rope around his waist to keep from being washed overboard. Inside the boat chairs and boxes and every other article that was not securely fastened lurched and skidded in a topsy-turvy mess. We couldn't help but think: "What price walrus!"

On the third morning, just as we were finishing a none too pleasant breakfast, the call of "Walrus!" was shouted down from the deck. This seemed impossible under the circumstances. The ship should have been many miles from the nearest ice, but we hurriedly climbed up to see for ourselves.

The *Morrissey* had just hove to into the wind, and less than a hundred yards off the port quarter could be seen the storm-packed edge of the ice! In a few moments we could also distinguish, through the haze and spray-filled air, the unmistakable hulks of about twenty big walrus riding quite unconcernedly in the chaotic sea not far from the margin of the pack. Had our ship been where they were it would probably have meant disaster. The seas broke in geyser-like spray against the billowing white wall beside them, yet the walrus seemed quite at home there. And they were perfectly safe, in so far as we were concerned, despite the fact that there were apparently some very large bulls in the bunch. For safety

THE AIVIK *of the great floes—two huge walrus bulls that now form part of a group in the American Museum of Natural History.*

HAROLD MCCRACKEN *with Tough, who mascotted the expedition with complete success. Over the gunwales of the famous schooner* MORRISSEY *hang the tusks of the two walrus seen above.*

demanded that we get out of our present position as quickly as possible. Had our engine stopped we might have drifted helplessly and been pounded to pieces on the jagged walls of ice.

There was more to the situation than merely the finding of walrus. The fact that the ice had already been forced this far down the Siberian coast was none too encouraging. It might extend on down across Bering Strait, and if the eastern ice had also come down as far, we were locked in. We headed for the Strait.

Two days later we found that the western ice had, as we feared, been pushed down along the Siberian coast and virtually all the way across Bering Strait. Only a narrow opening still remained between it and Cape Prince of Wales on the Alaskan mainland. We sailed through this; circled out around Diomede Islands, which were completely surrounded by ice; and came up on the lower edge of the ice.

Despite the fact that we were right back where we had started, and still without the bulls for the group, things looked far more encouraging than they had at any stage of the hunt.

A couple of days later the wind swung clear around and started driving the ice back into the Arctic. It was pushed against the Siberian side of the Strait, and we cruised back north between it and Diomede Islands. But

before we had got halfway through, two lone big walrus bulls were located hauled out about half a mile from the edge.

"Walrus! Walrus! Big ones!" exclaimed one of the Eskimo hunters excitedly as he hurried along the deck from his lookout post on the bow.

Our binoculars were focused on the animals. They were a long way back in the big ice. Their monster bodies, dried to an almost pink color by the sun, gave assurance of their desirability even from that distance.

The whaleboat was swung over the ship's side and lowered into the water. Our paraphernalia was put aboard, and we were soon winding our way back toward them. The ice was big, and they were often completely hidden from view for what seemed long periods. Then as we passed openings their awkward bulky bodies gave us assurance that they had not taken to the water and disappeared.

The closer we got the more certain we became that they were big enough even for our group.

It was necessary, owing to the lay of the icebergs, to go through a long narrow lane that would bring us right out upon them. And they were almost completely hidden from our view until we were not more than fifty feet away from where they lay.

Those were tense moments. No one spoke. I was at

the movie camera. It had been decided that Charlie Stoll should take one and Mrs. Stoll the other.

Everyone but myself was crouched down in the boat. Occasionally I could get a momentary peek at the tops of the great creatures over the jagged ice and so could direct the boat.

Never will I forget the sight that awaited us when our launch slipped out around the last point of ice and we were right upon them. They were monsters! One of them raised its ponderous body and turned a great bulging neck around to stare at us. A glance at that mighty head and big long ivory tusks gave us all a thrill.

Charlie's gun spoke. The crash was like a great explosion. The big beast's whole body jerked, and its head dropped to the ice. The other animal reared up, but no sooner had this second head and neck come into view than Merle's gun barked. Each fired another shot. By this time we were right upon them—hardly more than fifteen feet away. But it was all over.

Then the *Morrissey* came pushing her way in through the bergs to pick them up. It was a wonderful sight to see the sharp graceful prow of the schooner slowly cleave its way through the heavy ice and stop at last right alongside the pan on which our prizes lay.

They were big fellows, measuring approximately twelve feet in length, and their weight was estimated at

about a ton and a half apiece. Our group was complete at last.

We sensed that there were more of the great creatures not far away, and desiring alternative specimens which if not used in the museum group could be retained as personal trophies, we continued along the edge of the ice. We had progressed a comparatively short distance when once again the Eskimos sounded that heartening call: "Aivik! Walrus! Aivik!" And with our binoculars we quickly distinguished a sizable herd of the big brown animals hauled out up ahead of us.

As we neared these we sighted several other large herds farther on. But a strong wind had come up, and they were on the weather edge of the ice, which presented an unbroken wall for several miles without affording an opportunity for either the schooner or whaleboat to get inside. Stalking them seemed impossible.

There they were—at least three hundred in number—scattered in bunches along the edge of the ice and within sight of the Diomede Islands. Yet we could not get them in their present location.

Thinking that there might be still more around the point of the ice just above East Cape on the Siberian coast and that these also would soon move over to the lee side, we continued on our way. As we came opposite the first small bunch and the wind carried our scent

over to them, they hurriedly slid off into the water and disappeared in back of the edge. And every succeeding bunch was similarly "flushed." One after another the bunches went into the water like metal birds picked off their perches in a shooting gallery.

Before we reached the point of ice, however, we came to a break in the edge of the pack, and Captain Bartlett directed the schooner toward it.

Climbing into the rigging I saw the reason. There were two or three bunches of aiviks hauled out just beyond.

Once inside, the whaleboat was lowered and away we went.

It was quite calm inside, though the sea was breaking noisily on the edge and spurting spray high in the air just a short distance away. The ice was moving about very menacingly, however, and we had to be very careful not to go into a lead which would close and crush our boat.

The nearest group had taken to the water when the *Morrissey* glided in. Their big brown heads and glistening ivory tusks could be seen as they milled about in an open space within fifty yards of where we passed. But as the next group had not been disturbed we started for them.

Our previous experiences had taught us that it was

possible to run our whaleboat under throttled engine just about as close as we wished. We had also ceased to be overly cautious about their seeing our approach, for the only alarm which they had shown was when they got scent of us. Even the noise of our shooting did not seem to bother those that were a short distance away. But they certainly did not like our smell!

The whaleboat was maneuvred through the icebergs until it slipped out into the opening just across which the herd of almost prehistoric monsters lay crowded together in a confused mass on a single flat pan of ice. Just beyond them the sea was rolling in and booming and bursting into spray on the tightly packed edge. Beyond, about fifteen miles away, rose Big Diomede Island, the easternmost tip of Asiatic territory; and a less distance in the opposite direction was the mainland of Siberia.

"They're all cows!" whispered one of the Eskimo hunters who crouched in the bow with a half dozen harpoons stacked in readiness alongside him. And as we did not want to shoot any more of the females, all guns were laid aside.

The boat was maneuvered so that I could get a good picture of the herd. But almost before I had made the first exposure there must have been an eddy or whirl

in the wind, for they all quite suddenly took to the water.

When they started to disentangle themselves and rose up we saw that they were not cows but all bulls. There was a hasty grabbing for rifles and a hurried endeavor to pick the most desirable individuals.

Charlie managed to drop one on the ice, but all of the rest plunged into the safety of the water. I was not disappointed, though, for I had taken a good picture, which was really more prized than the head or hide of any of them.

We had seen two other lone ones on a pan of ice far out on the weather edge, and these were now the only ones hauled out within sight. So the *Morrissey* was signaled to come along and pick up the one that had been killed, and we started for the lone pair.

Before we got within range of these we were assured that one was a very good bull. Their position was a very precarious one. The sea rocked the big flat ice pan on which they lay, and the spray periodically shot clear over them. But we were all anxious to bid farewell to the ice floes and head for more hospitable latitudes, so I took a bead on the big one's neck as he rose up to look at us, and pulled the trigger of my rifle. His whole body jumped at the impact of the bullet, and his head

dropped down on the ice. Quickly I threw in another shell and let him have a second shot in the same place.

The prow of the whaleboat was now against the nearest ice, where we could go in safety without getting caught in the rough sea and pounded to pieces against the bergs. The two Eskimos jumped out as speedily as possible and started making their way from one pitching piece of ice to another in the direction of the dead walrus. And it was a feat well worth witnessing to see them do it.

By the time they had reached the animal the pan had shifted around so that the sea was breaking right over them. I yelled for them to cut off the head and do it as quickly as possible before the whole body slid into the water and was lost. Even this was not an easy task, as the head was but a few feet from the edge, and the pan was rocking and pitching in the sea.

Sensing that the walrus might start to slip at any moment, Grandy, one of the sailors on the *Morrissey*, grabbed a rope and started to the assistance of the Eskimos. I had thought that the natives had shown amazing skill in jumping from one bobbing piece of ice to another, but Grandy made them look like novices at the stunt. Later I found that Grandy had been literally born and raised doing this sort of thing with the sealing fleets that go north every spring from Nova Scotia.

Nor did Grandy get there any too soon. For he no more than had the rope tied around the animal's big tusks and fastened to a point of ice at the back of the pan than the ponderous body began to slip. Once started, it soon turned clear around and went over into the churning water. But the rope held, and they managed to sever the head.

All three of them were soaking wet from the spray, and how they managed to keep from going overboard themselves was a mystery. But they had saved my trophy.

Taking the end of the rope, Grandy made his way back toward the boat, pulling the head through the water at intervals with the assistance of the natives; it was eventually hoisted aboard and we were soon making our way out into open water. The sails were set, and we headed south once more through Bering Strait and toward less violent waters.

CHAPTER XI

THE SEARCH BEGINS

EN ROUTE to the Islands of the Four Mountains, where we hoped to discover some of the Stone Age Aleut mummies, the *Morrissey* stopped at Unalaska. We had no particular reason for calling in at that tiny village, which is the lone metropolis of the Aleutian Islands, though what happened during our brief visit completely changed the course of our expedition and probably its results. More than eleven years of careful planning was sidetracked, with the result that none of us ever set foot on any of the Islands of the Four Mountains.

My troubles had started even before we reached Unalaska. Undertaking to find some of these fabulous human mummies in such a barren string of rocky islands as the Aleutians, which are nothing more than volcanic peaks raising their summits out of waters per-

petually lashed by wind and storm, had been considered something of a wild-goose chase.

There was little doubt as to the actual existence of mummies in the Aleutian Islands, in spite of the fact that no expedition had been fortunate enough to discover any of them. In 1874 five wrapped mummified bodies had been brought to San Francisco from the islands by Captain E. Hennig, a fur trader in the employ of the old Alaska Commercial Company. But there were no records available as to the exact location where they had been found or details as to circumstances and other particulars which are essential in giving scientific value to such a discovery. They were brought out of Alaska more as curiosities than anything else. Three of the mummies, however, after considerable unfortunate handling by persons without a great deal of scientific knowledge, were sent to the National Museum at Washington, and two were presented to the California Academy of Sciences. It was reported that they had all been found in a single cave on one of the Islands of the Four Mountains.

There was also the tale of the unfortunate Swede fur trader who had discovered one or more of these mummies in the group of islands and left the locality to bring them (or it) to San Francisco in his small trading schooner for the purpose of selling or exhibiting for a

price of admission. But nothing had ever been heard of the fate of this man or his boat—the local natives claiming, to this day, that the evil curse which is the penalty for molesting the sacred bodies had caused the destruction at sea of the schooner and everyone on it.

Numerous persons had undertaken to discover and properly examine some of these mortuary heirlooms of the almost forgotten past in that section of the world; and though one or two expeditions had been in the Aleutian Islands for more than a year, the story of the mummies was still an enigmatic mystery shrouded in tradition.

One factor which explains the great difficulty in finding any of them is in the fact that they were evidently hidden with great care in secret caves in most inaccessible locations among the sea-pounded cliffs. Then, too, the frequent earthquakes and eruptions of the many active volcanoes of the district had contributed to completing their obscurity.

According to legend, the mummies of great tojas or skilled whale hunters retained the prowess of the original individuals, and those who possessed them were blessed with the same ability. If the mummies were stolen their prowess went with them. This fact may to the laymen seem somewhat at odds with the supposed curses which were the penalty for desecrating their

sacred ground, but such is the peculiar psychology of a native mind—a psychology difficult for the white man to understand.

Not all ancient Aleuts were mummified. Probably only a very few were thus honored—their famous hunters or chieftains. This would mean that only a very few individuals in a community in an entire generation may have been artificially preserved.

From an observation of the present-day Aleuts it is exceedingly difficult to imagine a time when these people were living in a culture that could boast any knowledge of even rudimentary mummification, yet whatever previous heritage of primitive culture they may have had was completely obliterated by the oppressive domination of the Russians, who from the first seem to have recorded them as an infamously degenerate people.

Even their dances and festivals seem to have been few and crudely barbaric. Yet there is probably as little known regarding Aleut ethnology as of any other type of aboriginal natives on the American continent. As Dr. W. H. Dall, who in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century spent considerable time investigating in the Aleutian Islands, once said: "The little that we do know [about the Aleuts and their customs] is so interesting that it renders our ignorance of the rest the more provoking."

However, in 1909–10, Dr. Jochelson visited the Aleutian Islands, but as yet has not published the full account of his investigations.

Like most of the other tribes of the northern part of America, the Aleuts were fond of dances and festivals. The piecemeal and rather vague bits of handed-down lore that I have been told would indicate something of a similarity in their entertainments to those of the Eskimos. Apparently they received neighboring villagers as guests on these occasions and offered songs and theatricals for their amusement. To the wild thumpings of rude tom-toms or drums naked men and grotesquely attired women and children danced for days and gorged themselves upon the raw flesh of whales and other sea animals. Many of them wore large wooden masks carved in effigy of the various animals.

At other times, so we are told, weirdly carved wooden images or stuffed birds were carried from village to village during the darkness of night and accompanied with strange and unexplained ceremonies. Sometimes large congregations of women would gather in places from which all men were rigidly excluded, and, wearing masks upon their faces, would dance naked in the moonlight. The men had similar dances. For any individual of the other sex to intrude upon these occasions was punishable by death.

Hoary legend has handed down but one prime fact which serves as any sort of explanation for the existence of these Aleut mummies: the intense respect which their people had for the dead. Nearly every other factor is extremely contradictory; and curiously, their nearest neighbors and closest tribal relatives, the Eskimos, have an almost diametrically opposite attitude. In fact, it makes them stand singularly alone among the various races and tribes of the earth.

While the Diomede Eskimos would complacently carry the bodies of deceased relatives out to be torn to pieces and devoured by their own dogs, an Aleut mother often would not bury her dead infant for months but would carry it continually about upon her back, even attempting to nurse the inert morsel. Often a dead baby would be kept and treated in this fashion until another one was born to take its place. It is said that the mothers sometimes placed the body of a deceased infant in a carefully carved wooden box. This was often kept for months near them in the cave-like dwellings, where the mother would watch it with the greatest tenderness, wiping away the mold and adorning it with such ornaments as she could procure. Occasionally a wooden dish, or *kantag*, containing food, was placed beside it for the spirit to feast upon.

Wives would also keep the bodies of their dead hus-

bands in their homes, offering them food, conversing with them, and in other respects treating them as though they were still alive. Occasionally, when the time for necessary burial arrived, the interment was even made inside the very compartment of the dwelling where the family lived—and the others would continue to occupy the home.

A bereaved lover would often commit suicide just to be able to lie in peace beside the body of the beloved one.

It is only natural that this strange obsession should reach its peak in tribal reverence for a dead chieftain. He was, no doubt, the leader in forages out to sea in search of food. During the long dark Arctic night it must have been he who ruled his little feudal clan with shrewd arrogance. When a frightened hunter came with news of having seen hostile canoes beyond the island it was the chieftain's task to judge the crisis and act.

A strange hard life it must have been, surrounded by a ruthless sea, a bitterly inclement climate, a barren land —and all combining cruelly to drive the little group of humanity from its unfriendly adopted homeland in the islands.

It was clear, therefore, why the tribe should wish to preserve the earthly remains of the one who had been leader and godfather to his people. Particularly clear because the chieftain's spirit was to them an entity as real

as the wind which, though it whipped the sea to foam, was quite invisible.

The asxi'nan, as the chieftain's mummy was called, was supposed to serve as a house for the dead man's spirit. Nearly every night, when darkness came, he and other chieftains, all immortal, would leave their "houses" to go forth once again upon their hunting expeditions, using the weapons and other things which their tribesmen had thoughtfully left with them. If the hunt was successful a feast was held with festivals and dances, around the entrance to their cave sepulcher. These lasted until dawn, when the spirits returned to their resting places. I have been told, in all seriousness, that native hunters overtaken by storm or darkness had actually caught glimpses of these weird performances by the dead.

Dr. Jochelson reports this unique belief of the Aleuts by saying:

"The Atka Aleut regarded them (meaning the mummies) as bewitched after death and called them *asxi'nan*, which properly means 'the departed ones.' The *asxi'nan* were hung up in caves in troughs resembling large cradles which were attached to crossbeams resting on two posts. Colored posts were placed in front of the entrance, which was also painted in different colors. The *asxi'nan*, according to Aleut belief, were busy through-

out the night; they rose, hunted, prepared food for themselves, held feasts and festivals, and in the morning resumed their squatting position."[1]

While Dr. Jochelson, though he spent a considerable length of time in archeological investigations in the Aleutian Islands, did not find any of these Aleut mummies, he is nevertheless the foremost authority on the subject. He further states:

"Two types of caves were used as burial-places: one with deep grotto-like passages with a large opening, the other in the form of small hollows in the rock. . . .

"Mummified corpses of distinguished people were hung up chiefly in the bottom of the grotto-like caves, while in the small caves, which evidently were regarded as village cemeteries, all the less distinguished were placed. According to Veniaminoff, common people and slaves were buried in such small caves, while chiefs and other eminent people were hung up in high, square, wooden boxes with slanting roofs, or were buried in separate earth lodges. However, it should be stated that we nowhere found traces of burials above the ground in boxes, as related by Veniaminoff, and no other Aleut knew of such graves. Such burials were called *qu'mnax* by Veniaminoff, but the Aleut use this designation for any place for the disposal of a body, whether it be a

[1]Waldemar Jochelson: "Archeological Investigation in the Aleutian Islands," Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1925.

cave, a special burial hut, or a compartment for the dead in an occupied underground dwelling."

Such was the mythical background which we hoped to, in part at least, establish as a reality.

Upon our arrival at Unalaska we were given the disheartening news that two other expeditions, secretly organized and well equipped, had left there on specially chartered boats about three weeks previously, for the Islands of the Four Mountains—in search of mummies. Apparently having taken advantage of the announcement I had made to the newspapers of my plan to go to that obscure group of islands, these boats had set out to get there first.

One of these beat-them-to-it expeditions, I regret to say, was backed by another museum. One of the parties had even gone to the trouble and expense of bringing a half-breed native all the way down from the Pribilof Islands to act as guide. It appeared that this man had once lived or been shipwrecked on one of the Islands of the Four Mountains and was supposed to know exactly where some mummies could be found.

This news was very painful. Naturally I envisioned a piracy of my years of piecing together isolated data, traditions, and myths, and tedious poring over early Rus-

sian records. The little grain I had sifted from the vast amount of chaff I felt should be ours exclusively.

By the merest chance, however, we picked up a vague clue at Unalaska, which, though at first not even taken seriously, led to an undreamed of climax.

Unalaska is a rather dilapidated remnant of the rule of Old Russia in Alaska. It was one of the first strongholds gained by the Czar in America. To-day, however, the big Russian Greek Catholic Church is unpainted, and rusty nails protrude from its warped boards; uncut weeds and tall dead grass hide the little graveyard where lie those who once ruled the land with such an iron-bound ecclesiastical hand; and the native village sits squalidly around it in the lap of a rock-strewn fishy-smelling beach.

Its natives are neither primitive enough nor civilized enough to be interesting. Most of them have an appreciable amount of Russian blood in their veins. Probably some of them, if they were capable of it, could trace their geneological trees back to very distinguished families of Moscow or St. Petersburg; but as to all this, they know nothing and care less.

They are still devout supporters of the Church, though the small pittances they make from doing menial tasks for the fishing companies, local storekeepers, and by

trapping hardly provides them with the barest necessities of life. One week's catch of sea-otter skins, back in the old days, probably meant more to the local priest than he derives from an entire year at the present time.

From external appearances it would not seem that any worth-while data or information such as we were interested in could possibly be found in any of the native shacks of this village. In fact, we made no particular attempt to seek such information at Unalaska.

Weyer and I walked down along the path between the dwellings and the beach to give the place one casual sight-seeing appraisal. Then I planned to visit the priest, to get permission to see the interior of the old church, and incidentally to question him regarding burial caves in the vicinity. I found the old gentleman, however, to be a newcomer in the country who could speak only a very few words of English and hopeless to talk to. He was not the priest permanently stationed at Unalaska, but only relieving the regular father who was away on a trip.

Just before we got back to the church, however, we happened to notice an aged Russian-Aleut man doing some repair work on his rickety shack. More from curiosity than in any real hope of securing information, we ambled up to question him. He was at first reticent and reluctant to talk. He shook from palsy, and his rheumy

eyes blinked mechanically like a sleepy owl's. But his final answer made our hearts beat faster with hope.

"There is old-time burial cave," he said, "on little island near Umnak Strait—north end. Very, very old. It is square like white man's box, and north wind cut it through."

Though we didn't take much stock in the old fellow's description, we were struck by the assurance with which he spoke of the cave.

"Are there mummies—asx'nans—or tojas in the cave?" I asked him.

He made a quick gesture of warning and shook his bony chin. "No! No! No!" he chattered. "You must no search for those! Bad luck—maybe die!" Then, reaching out his thin knobby hand to touch the sleeve of my mackinaw and lowering his cackling voice, he said: "But you dig there—find some very old things. Very old!"

He rambled on with surprising freedom in warning us about tampering with the mummy of an ancient inhabitant of the country. He unquestionably knew much about them—no doubt far more than he told us.

He did tell us that he had personally seen the mummies which Captain Hennig had taken out to the States in 1872—the only ones of whose finding was any authentic record, though regarding details of their discovery there are no scientific data.

Considerably encouraged, I now asked him if he knew where Captain Hennig had found or got his mummies, but he only shook his bony chin and chattered, "No! No!" I asked him if he knew where there were any others, but I only got the same reply and even more emphatically. I offered him money—but, "No! No!" And when I pressed the questions he ambled off as much as to assure us very definitely that he had told all he was going to tell and desired to have no further conversation on the matter.

Through the window of one of the village's two stores I happened to see two prehistoric stone lamps and a fine jade ax pushed back in a corner behind a pile of oranges. I could also see an elderly man with gray-white hair and those unmistakable characteristics which immediately marked him as an old-timer in the North country. I went right in, bought some tobacco, and introduced myself.

He knew "all about" our expedition. What was more, he knew "all about" the mummies. "No—I've really never seen any myself," he replied a bit reticently to my questioning. "You see—most of my trade's with these natives. I can't afford to go snoopin' round in their old burial caves. They're funny 'bout them things. They might stop buyin' their stuff from me, if I did. But, listen." Lowering his voice to a confidential whisper, he

leaned well over the bare board counter to continue. "What's it worth to you to know where you can find some?"

I evaded a direct reply to his last question until I could learn just how much he actually knew about the subject.

"Where did you get the old stone lamps and jade ax?" I questioned.

"I found the lamps on my fox island," he answered, reaching for the articles behind the little pile of oranges and laying them down on the counter in front of me. "The ax is from Point Hope. I had a store up there for several years."

"Are they for sale?" I queried. But he just smiled and shook his head.

"I used to have a whole lot of stuff from around Point Hope," he went on. "The Eskimos would bring it in to trade. But I kept sellin' and givin' the stuff away to folks that come in and admired it until this ax is the last thing I've got from up there."

In a little while I found that he apparently did not know a great deal more about Aleut mummies than I had already learned, and that the information which he intimated would take me to the exact location where mummies were hidden was second-hand and of somewhat questionable authenticity. So rather than compli-

cate things I decided to pass up the opportunity entirely and continue my original plans irrespective of conflicting circumstances.

Before I left this congenial old soul, who, as they say up there in the northland, had probably "missed too many boats for the States," he insisted that I take the best of the two stone lamps as a present. It embarrassed me a little, in view of my declining to make a bargain with him for the mummy information. I offered to buy the lamp, which is a beauty. But he steadfastly refused. It was a case of taking it as a present or leaving it. So I accepted the gift—then proceeded to make enough purchases in his store to reciprocate in part.

When I went outside there was considerable commotion. From the corner of the store I could see half a dozen men coming down off the hill in back of the village. In their midst was Tough, my bow-legged bulldog, who ambled complacently along at the end of his leash. Jim Dove, the *Morrissey's* chief engineer, had hold of the other end of the leash, and an excited native was apparently deriding both Jim and the dog in a most unfriendly manner.

Very shortly I learned what it was all about. Tough had accompanied some of the boys from our boat on an inspection trip to town. While ambling about the native shacks he had first happened on a large domestic hen

with a brood of little chickens. Tough, who had never made the acquaintance of a hen before, and probably thinking it was some strange creature which the museum would like to have, trotted briskly up for a close inspection. The hen, which had undoubtedly never seen a creature with my bulldog's extraordinary appearance, and probably thinking he was some dangerous animal of the wilds that had strayed in from the hills to devour her little chicks, made a flying attack and lit squarely in the middle of Tough's broad flat back. My poor dumb bulldog, thinking he was being killed, made a very undignified retreat at the greatest possible speed which he possessed. All of which caused great amusement to the onlookers.

Tough is at heart the meekest of creatures and has a very sensitive disposition, but his dignity had been impeached, and he sulked in silent search for something upon which to revenge himself. Nor did he, apparently, have far to look.

Grazing peacefully beside the Russian Church was Unalaska's one and only much prized milk cow. It was, to be sure, much bigger than the hen, but Tough is no respecter of size. It wasn't as large as an automobile, he no doubt thought, if Tough is really capable of thinking, and an automobile had never been found harmful. So after the cow he went.

He was right beneath poor Bossie before the greatly surprised creature realized that she was the subject of malevolent attack. Barking deep down in his broad chest, Tough had played a bouncing tattoo on the cow's bulging under-body with his sawed-off face. Completely forgetting the sweetness of the grass around the Russian Church, Bossie had started straight for the hills, endeavoring to leave that incubus of the devil as far and as quickly behind as was possible. But Tough had stuck right at her heels.

An excitable half-breed Russian, the proud and prosperous possessor of the prize milk-giver, had been working in a shed near by. Becoming aware of what he believed was the destruction of his barnyard monopoly, he sprang into wild pursuit, yelling a jumble of native and English verbosity injected into which were such vaguely intelligible words as "Gun!" "Kill!" "Help!" and "Murder!"

This became a signal for the contingent from the *Morrissey* to join in the race. Fortunately for all concerned, and Tough in particular, Jim was the fleetest of foot and got the bow-legged canine assaulter by the collar before any serious damage was done to either the cow or my pet. But he had enjoyed his revenge and seemed quite willing to return to the boat.

As the *Morrissey's* Diesel engine needed a little atten-

tion, Captain Bartlett decided it was best to remain in the bay until the following day, so that the necessary repairs could be made before going on to the westward. Time had suddenly become a vital and precious factor in our plans, with two other boats having a three weeks' advance start on us toward the most important goal of our entire expedition. Even at that very moment I feared one of them might be returning with some of the mummified treasures which I was so anxious should be discovered, if not by our expedition alone, at least by our expedition first. We were childishly impatient at every delay.

All this time, however, the conversation which we had had with the old Russian-Aleut kept persistently running through my thoughts: "Square like white man's box, and north wind cut it through. You dig there—find some very old things. Very old!"

I asked Weyer what he thought of the affair.

"Well—" he returned, with a little shrug of the shoulders—"it isn't much out of our way."

Something seemed to tell me that we should go as directly and quickly as possible to the Islands of the Four Mountains, as originally planned; though snap judgment prompted me to suggest we try to find the little island which the old native had told us about. Weyer and Stoll were for it, and so it was decided.

From Unalaska we worked westward, our two-masted schooner threading her way among the treacherous reefs and currents of the Aleutians. Captain Bob drove her boldly, though carefully. Our next scheduled stop was to be a little bay near the Bering Sea end of Umnak Strait. This was the nearest sheltered spot to the little island we hoped to find.

One of the United States Coast Guard pilots at Unalaska had drawn a map of the bay, on a piece of paper, to guide the skipper in taking our boat in and out of the place. It had never been charted.

I was torn between judgment and impulse. My better judgment seemed to dictate that stopping before we reached the Islands of the Four Mountains was a waste of valuable time; yet I could not dispel from my thoughts the rheumy-eyed old native's description of the little burial island.

I was awakened in the early morning by the harsh clanging of the ship's signal bell, and before I was completely awakened I knew that the engine had gone into half speed. We were probably entering the bay.

Although the ship's clock over Captain Bartlett's chart table showed that it was just a few minutes past four, I started crawling out of my sleeping bag to dress.

Emerging on deck I saw that we were close under a high rocky cliff and headed into a small bay that opened

unsheltered onto Bering Sea. There was a small grassy flat at the head of the bay, in back of which towered several barren, snow-capped, cone-shaped peaks.

Instinctively I searched the coast line for a small island that was "square like white man's box, and north wind cut it through." To be sure, there were numerous small animals in both directions. My gaze moved from one to another; stopped occasionally for closer inspection; but while they all seemed possibilities, none seemed completely to fit the description. A feeling of futility crept over me.

We had been told that there were half a dozen families of natives living in the bay, and soon the earthy dome-shaped tops of their barrabaras could be seen at one side of the grassy flat. I also noticed an unpainted dory pulled up into the grass near the mouth of a small stream. But the village was still asleep.

About half a mile offshore the *Morrissey's* anchor was dropped—and there we were.

I went down into the fo'c'sle with Captain Bob to get a mug of coffee. When I returned on deck two natives were rowing an unpainted dory out toward our boat, and several others could be seen standing on the grassy bank in front of their dwellings. Our arrival had been discovered.

Soon the rowboat was alongside. The natives nodded and grinned a friendly greeting to us, at the same time inquisitively eying the name which was carved on the prow of our ship and jabbering in their native dialect about it.

"Fine morning!" called out one of the Aleuts in very broken English as he threw the painter rope of his dory to one of our sailors. Then they proceeded to climb aboard.

They were uninteresting people in appearance. There was little that might be called "native" about them, except their brown Asiatic faces and jet black hair. From cap to shoes they wore white man's clothing—wrinkled, faded and frayed.

"How different from the fur-clad Eskimos!" I thought to myself.

One was quite old; while the other, who apparently alone could speak a smattering of English, was much younger.

"You—trade?" questioned the spokesman.

I explained that we were not traders, but just looking for very old things which their ancestors had used a long time ago. At this the younger man burst forth with a volume of dialect explanation to the other. There was considerable shrugging of shoulders, and if facial expressions were correctly translated they both seemed to

be either disappointed or amazed at the object which had brought us into their bay.

I asked if they knew of any places thereabouts where people had lived a very long time ago, or where there were any caves where the long-time-ago people buried their dead. But to this the spokesman only shrugged his shoulders and indicated he could not answer my questions. I asked if he knew of any small island that was "square like white man's box, and north wind cut it through."

"Maybe—I don' know," he replied, then added: "You sell us some flour, sugar?"

After we had eaten breakfast and the natives had been given some food, one of our power boats was lowered into the water, and we went ashore in the hope that someone more helpful might be found.

On the beach in front of the little group of barrabaras we met a white man. His hair was gray. That is, it would have been gray or possibly even white if it had been clean. He appeared even dirtier and less healthy than the natives around him. A ragged little half-breed boy clung to his pants' leg and peeked timidly, half wildly around from in back of it at us.

The realization of this man's place in life was so pathetically obvious that I could not help pausing to contemplate it. What inward motive, what inherited in-

clination, could possibly bring any civilized white man to be content in such squalid surroundings? But contented he seemed to be.

He told us, after a little while, the locations of two or three ancient village sites of considerable size where it was easy to dig out old-time things such as ivory and bone harpoon heads, flints, stone lamps, and the like. But if he knew the location of any burial caves or mummies he would not tell us anything about them. I was not surprised at this, for we were total strangers to him; and to tell us too much might gain for him the superstitious ill will of the natives.

He was really at heart and in soul more native than white man. No doubt if I could have remained long enough to gain his friendship a great many things of interest and value would have been learned, but there was no time for such preliminaries.

Eventually we made a bargain with the young native who had visited the *Morrissey* early that morning. In return for some of the flour and sugar which he had asked for, he was to act as guide in aiding us to locate the little island which was "square like white man's box."

When he learned that we were willing to supply him with the food in exchange for his services, he immediately said that he thought he knew the island we meant. But he was not quite sure.

The wind was fortunately offshore, though a big ground swell was rolling in that made landing on any of the little islands quite difficult even on the lee sides from the sea. To locate the desired island, even though we might not be able to make a landing the same day, would be an important accomplishment.

We spent two long days of cruising from one little island to another. From a distance several had appeared promising, but on closer inspection each proved a false alarm. We even landed on several, with our picks and shovels, to make sure that we were not passing by the place we sought.

The farther we went the more tiny islands we saw, and the more hopeless the search seemed to grow. We had also begun to sense that our native guide was little more than excess baggage in the whaleboat. And the most maddening part of it all was that we constantly pictured our rivals in the field searching the Islands of the Four Mountains and by pure luck making the coveted find.

It was an agonizing situation. If the Unalaska native was to be believed, the burial cave was almost underfoot. And I somehow felt that there were mummies in that same cave. For the Four Mountains were not more than fifty miles farther on. But if there was really noth-

ing to his story we were certainly wasting very precious time.

Our little party became hotly divided. Some thought we should go on at once. Others clung to the hope that Umnak Strait should be scrutinized still farther. And both sides in their hearts felt they might be wrong.

We compromised on one last excursion with our whaleboat. We paid off our native guide, loaded the boat with a small camp outfit, and set forth with no definite plan in view except to keep our eyes wide open. I wanted to say that we would not return until the island was found, but I did not have the confidence to make the assertion.

Down the coast we went, running the whaleboat out to sea to circle an island of suspicious appearance, or running in close to look at an island guarded by rocky cliffs and threatening breakers. Some slightly resembled a white man's box, though none were cut through by the north wind.

The morning of the second day we sighted a small flat-topped island that sprang unattached from the sea. It was about three miles away, but we started in that general direction.

"It certainly looks like a white man's box," said Weyer half jokingly.

Its sides rose up in perpendicular cliffs, and its top was as flat as a table. As we came closer we found that a veritable maze of kelp-drowned reefs surrounded it, making approach both difficult and very dangerous. So we decided to circle it at a safe distance.

But when the movement of our boat opened a deep canyon cutting the peculiar box-like tower of rock someone said in slightly more than a whisper: "*And the north wind has cut it through!*"

It took us the better part of an hour to work our way through to the islet's slimy base. It was scarcely more than a fragment compared with other looming islands in the neighborhood. In all it was not more than one hundred and twenty-five yards long and less than thirty wide. Its black cliffs shot straight up a hundred feet to a top as square as a biscuit tin.

The whole appearance of the place seemed to have been specially made as a movie set. At least, no more ideal or more picturesque place could have been desired as the burial place for a Stone Age chieftain or the mightiest of hunters of the turbulent Far North. Had modern man with all his art and genius undertaken to erect a mortuary monument in keeping with the primitive dignity of an ancient Aleut sea lord, he could not have fashioned a more appropriate edifice.

We had only a thin hope to go on. Those in our little

searching party, sensing this, even avoided any direct reference to the likelihood of our finding mummies on this tiny island.

In one way we had luck. Clearly the islet was hopelessly inaccessible in any but the calmest weather. From the wave-worn rocks and torn thin beach we could see how the sea must boil about it at times; and knowing the stormy Bering Sea as I do, I appreciated our good fortune in having such a calm day.

Long before we landed we heard the screech of sea birds that nested all over the island. Gulls and murres swayed above the table top. Black oyster catchers with long orange beaks bobbed and cackled from the near-by reefs. Dark puffins, overcome by their curiosity, dove at us from the cliffs.

Having secured the boat above the tide line we scrambled upward, looking for the burial cave. Had we been looking for pirate gold we could not have been more breathless in our search. There was no method in the way we hurried about. Two tried at once to reach the top; others made for the cleft—cut by the north wind.

The search was brief. Ten minutes later we were clustered in the entrance to a small shallow room in the cliff, which must have once been hollowed out by the sea. It was dark and smeared with bird lime, but its contents were beautiful to our eyes.

In the earthy débris underfoot were human bones, with here and there a grinning skull. Scraping with our fingers we found small implements of the native home, a lamp trimmer of bone, ivory spearheads, a stone lamp. This, beyond question or doubt, was at last the island which the old native had described.

CHAPTER XII

THE SEARCH ENDS

OUR jubilation at finding the island and burial cave which the old Unalaska native had described was painfully shortlived. A brief inspection assured us quite conclusively that it did not contain any mummified bodies. It was the burial cave of common people. If legend were believable, no chieftain lay here. No royal mummy would be left among the score of villagers' skulls that lay scattered hereabouts—and the bodies of common people were but seldom mummified.

Neither Mr. Stoll nor Weyer had a great deal to say. I knew they were as much disappointed as myself; yet they both diligently set about removing the earth which had sloughed into the cave, in careful search for the "very old things." Of course, the old native had not said

we would find any mummies in the cave. So far, his words had been truthful in every detail.

I didn't have the heart to stay in the cave. I felt as if I'd have to get out and let some of my depression wear off. The time which we had spent seemed really to have been wasted.

Calling young Junius Bird, I set off to climb to the top of the box-like island. I knew that Weyer and Stoll, with Grandy to help, could accomplish all that was required in the cave.

We had brought alpine sticks and ropes with us, and by their assistance Bird and I eventually hauled ourselves up over the top of the island's rocky cliffs.

What a naked spot it was! In a few minutes we had surveyed its bare flatness, empty save for a grassy stubble which struggled to make it an attractive nesting place for the many hundreds of birds that circled and dove screaming about our heads. Nests containing their eggs and naked ungainly young dotted the place so thickly that we had difficulty to avoid treading upon them; and grotesque, parrot-like puffins shot flopping out of burrows under our feet wherever we went.

There were a few saucer-shaped depressions in the earth which indicated that there had once been some sort of dwellings on the top. We started digging half-heartedly. When we found a few odd implements of

stone and bone imbedded in the soil my hope momentarily flashed up again. But even this did not have a lasting effect. We found nothing of importance.

I walked to the edge where the sod sloughed off over the crumbling brink of the island's sheer cliffs. To the north of me the blue Bering Sea spread to a cold horizon sharp as a knife. From below rose the sullen roar of the ground swell that thundered and swished monotonously against the jumbled mass of rocks. The air was chilly. I could smell the snow and ice that still capped the high volcanic peaks on the larger island a couple miles away at my back. Just beyond them was the northernmost edge of the great Pacific. There was not a cloud in the sky—it was one of the very few clear days that we experienced in our entire stay among the Aleutians—and there was a lazy warmth in the sun's rays. I am not writing for effect when I say that there suddenly crept upon me a feeling of remoteness from mankind. The sea and sky became infinitely vast and far away. I was but a speck in the center of an unfathomably strange universe. Here, I thought, was certainly the place of all places for an Arctic chieftain's tomb.

A call from the rocky shore below aroused me from my reveries. It was Weyer. He had decided to abandon the cave. He wanted either to return to the *Morrissey* or else take the boat and go over to the larger island to see

if there was a village site on a flat at the back of a little bay which he had noticed. I was inclined to agree that we should return to our ship, though I was reluctant to leave this picturesque spot. I suggested that they spend a little more time in the cave, and then we would hurry back to weigh anchor for the Islands of the Four Mountains.

Bird and I began digging somewhat energetically along the edge where we could push the excavated earth over the brink of the cliff.

We found more harpoon heads, a stone lamp, and a few other common implements.

I saw Mrs. Stoll making her way down over the rocks toward our whaleboat, carrying a box filled with white skulls. They were probably getting ready to leave.

Bird apparently became discouraged and said he was going to move farther down the island to try his luck at digging in a new spot. I worked on.

In a few moments Bird called out to me: "I've found a log cabin!"

I stopped my work to glance down in his direction. But the statement seemed so incongruous that I told him to go ahead and dig it out, and I returned to my own work.

Very shortly Bird called to me again. This time he insisted I come down to have a look.

Gathering up my handful of finds and dragging my shovel, I went over to where he knelt pawing the earth out from under the overhanging sod. He was grinning broadly, though a bit uncertainly, as I came up.

I sat down beside him and peered into the hole which he had dug. My heart gave a sudden jump. I could plainly see a row of age-rotted logs; and the manner in which they were closely fitted together assured me immediately that they had been carefully placed there by human hands—apparently a long time ago. But what could it be? Surely it was not the work of white men. The logs were too rotted, and I could not conceive of any reason for a white man using valuable driftwood in such an inaccessible place. We started excitedly digging the earth away.

I glanced down and saw that the rest of our party were waiting beside the whaleboat for us to join them. I yelled down that we had found something and that they had better come up to help us determine just what it really was.

As the earth was feverishly dug away and pushed over the cliff we gradually uncovered the end of a well built structure about nine feet wide. The more of it that we exposed the greater our excitement became, though we still had not the slightest idea as to what it might contain.

The top was made of split logs, uniform in size and laid close together under about two to three feet of earth and sod. In the long time they had lain there the logs had so rotted that it was difficult to tell where the earth ended and the sodden wood began.

Prying up the top layer of logs we caught a glimpse of badly rotted grass matting underneath. The structure was apparently completely filled.

We set diligently to uncovering the entire top. Soon we were stripping off our heavy mackinaw shirts in the heat of our labors.

The length was found to be about ten feet; and the farther we went with the uncovering the more certain we became that it was a structure of considerable importance. The amount of wood which had been used in its construction was evidence of this. For wood has always been a very scarce and valued article in that section. There has never been a tree that has grown within less than seven or eight hundred miles of the spot. All of the wood is carried by the currents of the Pacific and washed up onto the beaches of the Aleutian Islands by storms. Some of this driftwood originates in the forests of western Canada and the United States, as well as China or Manchuria, from where the big rivers carry it out to sea to start it on the long and haphazard journey on the currents to its remote destination.

For all of our eagerness and lack of knowledge of the structure's contents, we were meticulously careful. Almost tenderly we removed the top layer of logs, stopping at every stage to make still photographs and to run off snatches of motion pictures with a small portable machine that I had hauled up to the top from the beach by a rope. Although I had a big movie outfit in the whaleboat I did not, however, at first deem the find important enough to go to the effort of bringing it up.

We found that underneath this top layer of logs there were many layers of coarsely woven grass matting, between which was an occasional layer of tanned sealskin. This first series of mattings and skins, however, were in such a bad state of preservation that it was almost impossible to save more than bits of them.

On top and directly in the center of the first layer was a finely made stone lamp about four inches long; and near it were two irregular shaped obsidian implements.

Underneath this first deep series of mattings and skins, we came to another layer of logs similar to those on the top. These were in a far better state of preservation. The cracks between each pair of covering logs were calked with neatly tied grass bundles and pieces of fur completely to seal the lid. As we removed the logs, one by

one, the elaborateness of the construction became even more obvious and impressive.

Beneath this second tier of logs were more layers of grass matting, tanned skins, and sheets of sewed sea-lion intestine such as the Aleuts and Eskimos still use for making their fine waterproof raincoats. These lower layers were also of a much finer weave and in a much better state of preservation.

We were by now thoroughly satisfied that the structure was a primitive burial sarcophagus of very unusual character; though still we did not guess what our further work was going to reveal.

When our searching fingers touched hard long objects near the bottom of this second layer of mattings and skins, we thought we had found a skeleton.

"We must take him out carefully," muttered someone.

But the objects were soon found to be a double-bladed bidarka paddle and two pieces of wood of about the same length which possibly had been placed there for the repair of the ghostly canoe. There was also another fine stone lamp—for the dead man to light the darkness of his night and to warm his naked spectral body.

After lifting these things out one at a time, cataloging them, and carefully laying them on one of the large

mats already removed, we picked up the remaining layers of woven grass matting and tanned skins. As in a dream we gazed at the sight which met our gaze. At last the interior of the sarcophagus was exposed to the light. For the first time we all paused. I think there was an unspoken sense of reverence for the mighty Aleut chieftain or hunter for whom it was now quite apparent this primitively elegant crypt had been built.

The box-like structure was divided into two equal compartments. One compartment, it appeared, contained a single wrapped body. The other contained several bodies, less meticulously wrapped and much crowded together.

So far we had found no article or influence which would indicate evidence of contact with Russian or other outside culture. I cautioned the others to be on the lookout for any bit of metal which might disprove the antiquity of our find. But there was none.

Lying over the container of the single wrapped body which occupied one half of the sarcophagus and which we believed to be the great chieftain was a large bundle of heavy harpoon or spear shafts, each capped with long finely made heads of bone. Near these was a wooden shield. They had no doubt been placed there to serve the deceased in his after life.

All of the woven grass fabrics which we could now

see were of exquisitely fine quality, and dim faded intimations of crude patterns were traceable here and there. We stopped to examine some of these pieces and found their weave akin to that of a fabric, some even finer than the best of Panama hats. The skins were mostly of pup seals, sea otters, and birds, finely tanned and some decorated with sewed-on designs and red coloring.

The container for each body was a tray or basket-like arrangement made of tanned and decorated pup-seal skins fastened by thongs to wooden hoops. The upper edges of the baskets were lashed across with very finely and intricately woven sinew ropes about the diameter of a lead pencil.

These containers lay upon a lining of sea-otter skin which had originally completely lined the sarcophagus. Clothing and personal belongings filled the outer spaces.

To one side of the chieftain lay his cone-shaped wooden hat, probably for festival occasions. Articles of clothing and personal adornment, probably of a ceremonial nature, were close by. One garment was a beautiful parka of sea otter trimmed with bird skins and having long decorated fringes. Two halves of a harpoon foreshaft were under the first layer of grass fabric covering the body. Near by was found a beautiful little carving of what was apparently pure white marble,

THE MUMMY *of the Arctic chieftain of the Stone Age after the closely woven wrappings had been laid back.*

NOT THE CHIEFTAIN HIMSELF, *but one of his mummified escorts, lying near the former's beautifully preserved body.*

which in spite of its unusual shape was identified as a very extraordinary labret or decorative plug worn in a hole through the lower lip. There was also a shallow wooden bowl, oval and about twelve inches long, at the foot of the body; a notched piece of wood about three feet long; some flint implements; some rolls of fine grass fabric, and a few other small articles.

We now turned our attention to the bodies. I say bodies, and yet we still had no positive proof that was not circumstantial.

It was with difficulty that we waited until each article had been labeled with a numbered tag and catalogued as to description and exact details as to where it had been found. That done, we loosened the sinew ropes which bound the container of the chieftain and carefully laid back the outer fabric and skin coverings, and unwound the finer shroud of grass fabrics and gut. Suddenly the first conclusive evidence of our triumph sprang into view—a dry, brown, wrinkled hand. Almost breathlessly I touched it. It was as hard as dry leather—*the hand of a Stone Age human mummy of the Arctic!*

Like a flash of lightning the realization of our discovery burst upon us. Here was the goal which for more than eleven years I had dreamed of reaching. And yet, how almost mysteriously had the discovery been made—much as though Fate had been intentionally toying with

us, changing our plans and diverting our course, then by the merest of chance pointing the way to the cherished treasure, the final discovery.

I had never expected to find any of these mummies except in caves. It was a new type of burial, and it was complete in every detail, just as it had been the day that those ancient peoples placed that last log in the lid and covered it over with earth.

With tenderness and respect we lifted the chieftain's body out. He was not of large stature, and the manner in which his knees had been pressed up against his chest and the shriveled state of his body greatly minimized his size. He was clad in what was once a magnificent parka of sea-otter skins trimmed like the spare one which had been found near by. His head was encased in a hood of finely woven grass fabric that extended well down over his body. Under this was a hood of sea-lion intestine, and then another one of grass next to his face. His legs were covered with fine grass fabric leggins, above the tops of which his leathery knees protruded in a lifelike way. We could even see the hairs in the dried skin of his legs; and the details of his joints, trunk, and limbs were in a remarkable state of preservation.

Death and time had robbed the chieftain of his softly yielding flesh and his firm muscles, though much of his

once expressive countenance and his dignity remained. So successful was the artistry that had gone into his preservation that we seemed to feel his very presence there among us.

In a flash I saw him as he must have been possibly centuries before, surrounded by his admiring tribal brothers, standing on the low foreshore, narrowed eyes shaded by one hand against the blinding summer sun of the Far North, the other pointing to a distant puff of vapor where a great walrus or the spout of a whale awaited the daring hunter's harpoon. A fine picture of man, defying nature, aspiring—aspiring to he knows not what, but man, the ultimate master of the part of the earth on which he dwells.

Among the things which Weyer noticed upon inspection of the mummy of the chieftain was that the finger nails had apparently been pulled out. This, he told us, was a custom practised by the ancient Egyptians. He also remarked that the body of this Aleut mummy was in a better state of preservation than most of those he had seen during his work in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt.

I took notes as we worked: staccato, almost emotional notes, such as really have no place in a scientific field record:

"Viscera removed—cavity filled with grass—they didn't want the chief to suffer from indigestion; eyeballs removed—cavities filled with brown clay over which eyelids had been pulled—they must have wanted him to be as handsome as he was in life. . . .

"He had been laid flat on his back on a second wooden shield—a viking's funeral . . . ?"

We now turned to the other mummies. They were not so well wrapped, and they were crowded. Obviously they were persons of lower rank—possibly "grave escorts" who had been put to death to accompany the dead dignitary's entry into paradise, and to serve his needs in the realm of spirits..

Supporting this fact, Sarytschew, in the accounts of his early explorations in the Aleutian Islands, says that "the custom formerly prevailed at the decease of a Toja [skilled whale hunter], or any other man of consequence, of burying his servants with him." And Sauer, commenting on the customs of Kodiak Island in his account of Captain Billings' expeditions in the latter part of the eighteenth century, says that "the most confidential of a chief's laborers are sacrificed and buried with him."

The first of these grave escorts' mummies which we examined was that of a man—probably the hunter or bodyguard who had been sacrificed to accompany his

chief. He had been prepared for burial with less care than any of the others and was in a far poorer state of preservation. The skull had evidently been crushed and was perforated by a hole more than an inch in diameter—mute evidence of the manner in which he had been put to death. Near by were found a stone war club, the characteristic wooden bowl, a wooden shield, and a few small articles probably of personal ownership.

The next mummy was that of a woman—possibly the seamstress, housekeeper, or "private secretary," who had apparently been sacrificed to serve her chieftain in her own particular way. Beside her container lay a large sealskin bag filled with an assortment of materials suitable for mending her master's garments. She had also a fire block for starting his stone lamp; a few other household articles; and a small skin pouch filled with red ocher—possibly her rouge!

Her mummified body had been prepared for burial in the same general fashion as had the chieftain's, though somewhat more simply. A grass matting of moderate coarseness was spread over the mummy bundle and its hoop frame. The body itself lay on a sheet of closely woven grass fabric, which in texture corresponded to the wrappings of the chieftain, though less fine.

The body itself was clothed in garments woven of grass. There were no sea-otter or birdskin parkas to

bedeck this ancient lady, which tends to indicate that she was a servant rather than the chieftain's wife. Her close proximity to the other man also supports this theory.

Her head was in a very remarkable state of preservation, actually retaining most of the features which were hers in life. Straight black hair covered the larger part of the skull in a most natural manner. From her nose hung a sinew string on which were six beads that lay over the closely drawn lips. Four of these beads were later definitely identified by Dr. Herbert P. Whitlock, Curator of Mineralogy at the American Museum of Natural History, as a variety of *Korean* amber!

These four beads, crude bits drilled and strung on sinew, may be important factors in proving a contact between aboriginal Americans and Asia.

This mummy had slipped down where one end of the sarcophagus had badly rotted away; and owing to a closer contact with the earth the lower part of it was in such a bad state of preservation that we brought back only the remarkably preserved head, which was well encased in waterproof gut and fortunately extended up into the dry part of the structure.

In one corner of the sarcophagus we found a small mummy container that was in such complete and satisfactory condition that it was brought back to the

museum intact, where it was unwrapped after our return and found to contain the body of a three- or four-year-old child.

The last mummy was found in a small gut sack wrapped in sealskin near the head of the sacrificed woman. It was the mummified body of a baby probably not more than eight months old!

Possibly these last two may have been the chieftain's own offspring, though the evidence is contradictory of this. It seems more probable from a consideration of the circumstances under which they were interred and of Aleut folklore, that the explanation is purely a fondness on the part of the chieftain for these particular children or children in general, and they also had been sacrificed that his stay in paradise might be the more pleasant and lasting.

Our discovery was complete, though our work was by no means finished. Now a serious difficulty confronted us. How were we going to get the mummies and other precious materials safely down from their high rocky perch? To attempt to carry them down the face of the cliff was entirely out of the question. After a brief survey of the situation we decided to use the narrow canyon, cut through by the north wind, as the old Aleut had said. We decided to run lines from each

edge, forming a bridle that would support the heavy weights we must send down.

But this plan compelled us to return to the *Morrissey* for necessary tackle. So we piled our treasures close together and covered them with our oilskins and coats which we ungrudgingly stripped from our own backs. Elated, hungry, and suddenly tired, we scrambled down the dangerous descent and boarded our whaleboat.

Alas, Aleutian weather changes in the twinkling of an eye. During the night, while we all slept contentedly on the *Morrissey,* heavy storm clouds filled the sky, rain began to drizzle, swelling to a steady downpour.

We were all up very early, but consternation filled our thoughts. It might be impossible for us even to make a landing on Mummy Island for days or weeks—and we had visions of our treasures being completely ruined before we could get to them. Had Fate played us one final sinister joke?

But we started out. The ground swell was running much higher, and there were a few whitecaps. It looked bad.

At last we drew near to the island. Grandy was at the tiller of our big whaleboat.

"Can we make it?" I asked him, half fearfully, as the boat's engine was throttled down, and we all stood up to take a questioning look at the dangerous zone of

reefs and kelp patches that surrounded the island like a battery of defending fortresses.

"We can try," he returned with his Nova Scotian accent.

We all respected Grandy's ability and knowledge of the sea. It had been proved on many an occasion during the course of our expedition. In we started.

It was a risky trip. We rode the swells and dodged jutting rocks precariously. But at last the big whaleboat ran her nose up onto the rocks with a sudden bump, and we hurriedly jumped out to haul it up where the waves couldn't pound it to pieces.

To return to the table top of the island, after we had made our landing, was a perilous task. If we had not left a long rope dangling down over the cliff at the place of ascent we might not have been able to climb up over the slippery rocks. Our treasures were found safe and still dry.

More than once that day I uncomfortably thought of the threats of death which the old Aleut medicine men had for generations been calling down upon those who molested their sacred mummies. Probably the others thought of them, too. But no one mentioned them, and our work proceeded methodically.

We made a litter out of pieces of the wood which had formed the top of the sarcophagus, and, using a large

rubber poncho as a screen, at last swung the old chieftain out into the canyon cut through by the north wind. After his long undisturbed rest he once more descended to the sea, on which he had no doubt gained his renown. And shortly afterward followed those who had been sacrificed that they might accompany him wherever he went.

Large packing boxes filled with fine excelsior had been brought from the *Morrissey*. The mummies and other treasures were hurriedly though carefully packed in these, and the boxes were then nailed and covered with canvas and ponchos.

Late that night they were safely stowed away in a dry compartment in the *Morrissey's* hold, and we continued on our way, carrying also the curses of misfortune and death.

Perhaps it is a sign of weak character to mention that our rivals failed to find a single mummy.

CHAPTER XIII

THE END OF THE TRAIL

THE *Morrissey* plied slowly and cautiously out of the nest of reefs and submerged juttings of rock that lay like eider ducks' eggs in the little bay where she had been anchored during our search for the mummies. Probably more than one member of our expedition breathed a sigh of relief when the big schooner was once again on the high seas and Captain Bob turned the ship over to the first mate as he went below to plot our course. The relief, however, was but temporary.

Native superstitions and the curses of primitive, wrinkled old medicine men sometimes become entangled in realities which even the most skeptical of modernists find it difficult to explain. The numerous mishaps to and deaths of archeological explorers of the ancient tombs and sacred grounds of Egypt, Carthage, China, and Malay are well known.

From the Aleutian Islands the course of our ship was to take us into probably the most hazardous section on the face of the earth—the polar ice north of the Siberian coast. This in itself was cause for concern.

Captain Bartlett had told us many a tale of the superstitions of those hardy Newfoundland and Nova Scotia men who go down to the sea in ships, and the women who wait patiently for their return. They are his own people. Every member of the *Morrissey's* crew had been born and reared among them. They are one and all of the old school of deep-water seamen. Yet if Captain Bartlett had any misapprehensions as to carrying as passengers the mythical curses which went with these Aleut mummies, there was no word or evidence to prove it. In fact, he was as much delighted at our success as any of the others.

And then, when the *Morrissey* was right out in the middle of Bering Sea with no land or shallow water less than a hundred miles at any point of the compass, the ship's special four-inch propeller shaft quite mysteriously broke about midway between the engine and the propeller. The mishap left us completely at the mercy of winds and sails.

"It's them damn mummies in her hold!" surmised one of the more superstitious of the sailors. He smiled when

he said this, but there was something about the look in his eye which made me feel he had meant it.

Fortunately, we had a fair wind for Bering Strait and the only desirable harbor which would not take us a long way off our course; but unfortunately there was not an extra propeller shaft on the boat to replace the broken one, and it was unlikely one could be got nearer than Seattle. What was more, the broken ends of the shaft were grinding and thumping ominously in the bottom of the ship and might do very serious damage before we could reach a place where it could be removed. It meant beaching the ship, unloading her, and probably a long expensive delay.

There was a possibility that we might get a spare shaft from one of the big gold dredges near Nome, which could be turned down to the necessary dimensions, though this was doubtful.

Then the wind shifted. It was not enough completely to upset our general course, but it considerably impeded our speed. The curse of the mummies seemed to have got into its stride.

With the assistance of our two power launches we managed to limp into Grantly Harbor, at Teller, where the airship *Norge* came to earth after her memorable flight over the north pole. The first thing we did, after entering, was to run hard aground on a mud flat. This

necessitated the laborious task of unloading all of our heavy drums of fuel oil and other supplies and transporting them to land. Only our personal equipment (and the big cases containing the mummies!) was left on board.

The mosquitoes almost drove us crazy. The delay caused many an openly expressed curse of its own. And little wonder would it have been if the mummies had been dumped into the bay!

Luck was to a certain extent still with us, however, as Captain Bartlett was able to get a new propeller shaft of the right size and length at Nome; and with the help of a crew from the U. S. Coast Guard Cutter *Northland,* who graciously came to our assistance, the new shaft was swung into place while the keel lay imbedded in the muddy bottom. Finally the ship was pulled off into deeper water, and after only about two weeks' delay we started on toward the Arctic ice floes.

But we had storms, fog, and unusually bad ice conditions. At one time there were four ships attempting to force their way through the ice between Wrangel Island and the north coast of Siberia. We were one of them. Three of these boats were caught in the icy clutches of the polar pack. But strangely enough, the only boat which did not have such a disastrous experi-

ence was the one which had two big packing cases filled with Aleut mummies in her hold!

One of these three unfortunate ships was the Swenson Trading Company's motor ship *Nanuk,* an attempt to reach which by aëroplane the following year caused the death of the famous Arctic pilot Carl Ben Eilsen and his companion Earl Borland. The *Nanuk* managed to get out of the ice in 1928, but was caught fast the following summer. The other two vessels stayed in the ice all winter. One of them never returned through Bering Strait.

On our way into the Arctic we had left Weyer on Little Diomede Island to study the natives. Upon our return to pick him up, however, we found bad news awaiting us.

Weyer had gone across Bering Strait to Cape Prince of Wales on the Alaska mainland with an umiak load of natives. From there he had set out on another journey in a small skin boat—and had not returned. A government boat had brought the Diomede natives back home; but as far as any of them knew Weyer had never returned to the village of Cape Prince of Wales. They told us that the government boat had waited two days for him, but because of bad weather had been forced to leave without our young archeologist.

We brought all of his personal belongings aboard, for

he had left behind everything but the clothes on his back. That had been about six weeks before. Then, as we headed straight for Cape Prince of Wales, we hastily got in touch with both the Coast Guard boat and the Police Department at Nome. Neither source provided any information whatever.

Almost fearfully, lest it be the true explanation, I surmised that Ed Weyer was possibly the first to suffer the malicious curse of the mummies.

But we found that he was safe at Cape Prince of Wales village, having been marooned by bad weather which caused him to miss the boat back to Little Diomede. In fact, he had grown fat on the hospitality which had been accorded him!

At last, our work and our expedition was at an end and the *Morrissey* steamed back to Prince Rupert, British Columbia. We unloaded all our boxes, cases, and barrels of specimens to be shipped to New York over the Canadian National Railway; and the schooner set out for home by way of the Panama Canal.

But the mummies were not yet home. When we presented them at the railway station for shipment with the rest of our equipment it threw the men in charge (and ourselves) into a quandary. For nowhere in the shipping regulations could there be found any clause or provision as to how, or if, they could be accepted

THE SHROUDED BODY *of a lord of the ice, mummified in the dim past, lifted from its primitive but elaborate sarcophagus.*

THE BASE *of the sarcophagus, with heavy timber supports and lining of woven grass—link with an age that has already passed from the memory of the Eskimo as completely as the glories of Genghis Khan have been lost to the modern Mongol.*

for transportation. They weren't "raw hides" or "trophies" or "salt fish." Of course, they *could* be shipped as human corpses, but that would require a first-class ticket for each of them, a specified coffin, and an attendant or something to accompany them! It was even a technical question as to whether they qualified in this classification. And it had also been suggested that I might have trouble with the United States immigration officers or customs men in bringing them across the international border. They had no quota whatever covering ancient Aleuts!

As a last resort and thanks to the kind consideration of the Canadian National official at Prince Rupert, they were accepted for transportation as C. O. D. "excess baggage"; and a telegram was forwarded to the railroad officials at Montreal that they might try to determine just what, if anything, should be done about it.

The result was that no one could find any alternative classification to which they could be alloted, and they rode into New York City with our personal baggage. Their transcontinental trip cost something like $10.19 apiece.

When we stop to realize that these mummified individuals during their natural lives and the lives of all their predecessors, knew nothing of the use of metals or even of the "principle of the wheel," their trip

from that remote tiny island on the edge of Bering Sea is truly phenomenal. They traveled to lands the existence of which they had had no knowledge. The various principles of transportation had never so much as entered their thoughts, and the civilization into which they were unknowingly brought as honored and much heralded individuals was a world of magical wonders stupendously more amazing than the wildest imaginings of their most fanciful medicine man.

THE END

APPENDIX

A NOTE ON THE ANTIQUITY OF THE MUMMIES

THE writer was naturally disposed to look upon these burials as of great age and as belonging to a pre-Aleutian people, but when they were returned to the museum and carefully studied, the mode of burial so closely corresponded to that of the early Aleuts as described by the first Russian observers that it was clear that they were the mummies of ancient Aleuts. The following descriptions are quoted from one of the three American Museum of Natural History anthropological publications on the subject,[1] which has been prepared under the direction of Dr. Clark Wissler, Ph. D., Curator in Chief of the Department of Anthropology and Archeology of the museum.

[1]From a paper by Mrs. Margery L. Loeb, now in press.

"Of the two complete bodies received by the museum, that of the chief, specified by McCracken and Weyer as No. 1, was brought with some of the wrappings still about it, and the bundle of the mummy specified as No. 4 was practically intact. There seems to have been one difference between its condition in the field and when it reached New York. On the field photograph the outer wrapping appears to have been secured by a thong laced back and forth, whereas when it reached the museum this outer wrapping was gone and the thong had been roughly tied from one side of the burial hoop to the 'baggage handle' on the other.

"*The Unwrapping of No. 4.* The bundle rested on a flat wooden frame, and was encircled by a wooden hoop. Perhaps the best method of describing the wrappings is in the order in which they were removed, naming the layers in accordance with the diagram.

"On top were two pieces of twined grass fabric, the selvages lapping over each other along the center of the bundle. The design and technique of the two pieces is the same. Under this fabric, to the left of the feet of the body, were four wooden spoons, a small empty wooden box, and a shell.

"When the grass fabric was removed, a blanket, or possibly the remains of a garment of gutskin, was revealed, which extended far down on the left side, but was disintegrated on the right. At the right of the bundle, under the gutskin blanket, was the rolled-up fur garment of a child. Beside it lay a conical openwork

bag split down one side, in which the garment had apparently originally been placed and from which it had fallen when the bag split.

"Under the gutskin blanket was . . . a covering of sea-otter skin doubled and wrapped around the body so that the fur surface appeared on both the inside and outside. A few fragments of fringe adhering to it indicated that it might have been part of a garment. A bundle of crude fabric, moss, and grass lay in a deep fold of the fur at the left, and was probably part of the bedding described below which had been forced into the fold.

"Under the fur a twined fabric was wrapped about the mummy and folded under the head, and directly under this another coarser fabric was wrapped about the body from left to right, with the overlapping edge tied to the under one with a piece of sinew.

"Next to this was the body itself, covered with two gutskin garments, one on the trunk and one over the head.

"The body rested on a bedding of grass and moss, under which was a woven grass fabric. One of the curious 'shaft sections' lay beneath this and another layer of grass and moss, mixed with fragments of coarse fabric.

"All of this rested on a partly disintegrated sealskin drum, still attached in places to the burial hoop, while hoop and all lay on the wooden tray.

"*The Unwrapping of No. 1.* Only the wrappings directly about the body of the chief, mummy No. 1,

remained, and these were considerably different from those about the body of the child, No. 4.

"Part of a birdskin garment with the feather side in covered the head and face and extended somewhat down the back. Beneath this and over the face was a rectangle of gutskin strips with sinew skins attached to it, and under the strips a small piece of very fine woven fabric. Lastly there was a birdskin mask which must originally have covered the entire face, since fragments were found about the mouth, but of which only enough remained to cover the eyes. The feathers of the mask were turned toward the face, and at the left side it was tied with a fine twisted sinew cord to the ear, as it probably also was originally at the right side. Under the neck was a small piece of very fine woven fabric, and in the lower lip was a labret of discolored jade.

"A conical woven bag rested on the chest of the chief. Each limb was wrapped in a rectangle of woven fabric secured with sewing. The leg coverings extended over the foot and were turned up over the sole, forming a rough boot. The arm coverings extended from under the armpits to the wrist. The right hand was flexed, and sewed up in a separate piece of fabric, but the left hand was extended and exposed.

"The body lay on pieces of woven fabric, and fragments of sealskin and straw, evidently the remains of some wrappings which had previously been removed, adhered to it underneath and were pressed into the folds of the mummy skin in some parts.

"The manner of wrapping of the mummies corresponds in general though not in minute detail with the only other similar mummy burial from the Aleutian Islands which has been carefully described.[1]

"Apparently the exact method of applying the wrappings was not standardized, as was noted above in the differences between those of mummy No. 4 and mummy No. 1. However, the same materials, namely grass fabric of varying degrees of fineness, sea otter skins, bird-skin parkas, and occasionally gutskin garments or blankets were used on the mummies described by Dall from Kagamil Island.

"The frames in which the bundles formed of the wrappings were placed were also in most respects similar to those of the Mummy or Fortress Island mummies. The oval wooden rims with sealskin drums attached were the same, although in the case of the Kagamil mummies wooden dishes seem to have been placed inside of the bundle and attached to the outside as well, whereas in the case of the Fortress Island mummies the bundles were placed on top of the dishes, but these were not attached.

"One other point is notable. The oval hoops containing the Kagamil mummies were slung over a framework so that the bundles hung. This was evidently a common practice, since Jochelson notes that an old Aleut informant told him that the bodies of distin-

[1]W. H. Dall, *Cave Relics of the Aleutian Islands,* Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, 1878.

guished whalers were hung up in caves. Although the Fortress Island mummy bundles were carefully packed in a crypt rather than hung, nevertheless the practice of hanging may explain two features of the bundles. In the first place the curious 'shaft sections' may have been parts of a framework originally intended for hanging the bundles, or they may have been ceremonial symbols of an earlier practice. The 'baggage handles' attached to the frames may also have been for the purpose of hanging the bundle.

"Special attention should be called to the remarkably fine needlework and decorative bands used to embellish the grave garments [the museum report continues]. The Aleuts are still famous for their fine baskets, mats, and needlework, but the work of to-day is not equal to the high standard of early days nor of the objects found in the burial. A full description of the costumes of the bodies has been published by the museum. The garments of fur were decorated with embroidery and fur fringes. The almost miscroscopical scale upon which some of the work is projected is truly astonishing. At best one needs a reading glass to see the details. We know from early accounts that this work was done with stone tools and bone needles. That such work had been carried to a high point is clear from the Fortress or Mummy Island specimens.

"The condition of the materials of which the embroidery is composed renders exact identification of them impossible. Some idea, however, of the specializa-

tion with which such materials are selected may be had from a description given by Dall of the contents of the work bag of an Innuit girl. The Innuit, he explains, decorate their clothing in a manner not very unlike that used by the Aleuts, but much less fine:

"The Innuit girl, for her work bag, requires the skin of the cod, or other smooth-skinned fish, stretched and dried. . . . Next the skin of the young hair-seal, scraped and dressed very thin, and made as white as possible. Part of this has the hair cut evenly and closely till it is not longer than the pile of silk velvet. Another part is entirely deprived of hair and is as white as fine kid. Then the gullet of the same seal is made into a stout parchment, either white or yellow, or frequently colored red, black, or green with native pigments: oxide of iron, charcoal and oil, and a green mould found in decaying birch wood (Peziza). Then the skin of fur animals is taken, and, while the soft fur is untouched, the inside, after being dressed, is colored; as above; a narrow strip forming a pretty fringe. The white belly, throat and leg patches of the reindeer in summer are carefully selected for those parts with the whitest and finest hair, which is cut to a uniform shortness. With these, and plenty of whale or deer sinew for making thread, and with needles, her repertory is nearly complete.

"Regarding methods used in producing the decorations under discussion, only a few comments are available. Dr. Dall describes the method of scoring fur as follows:

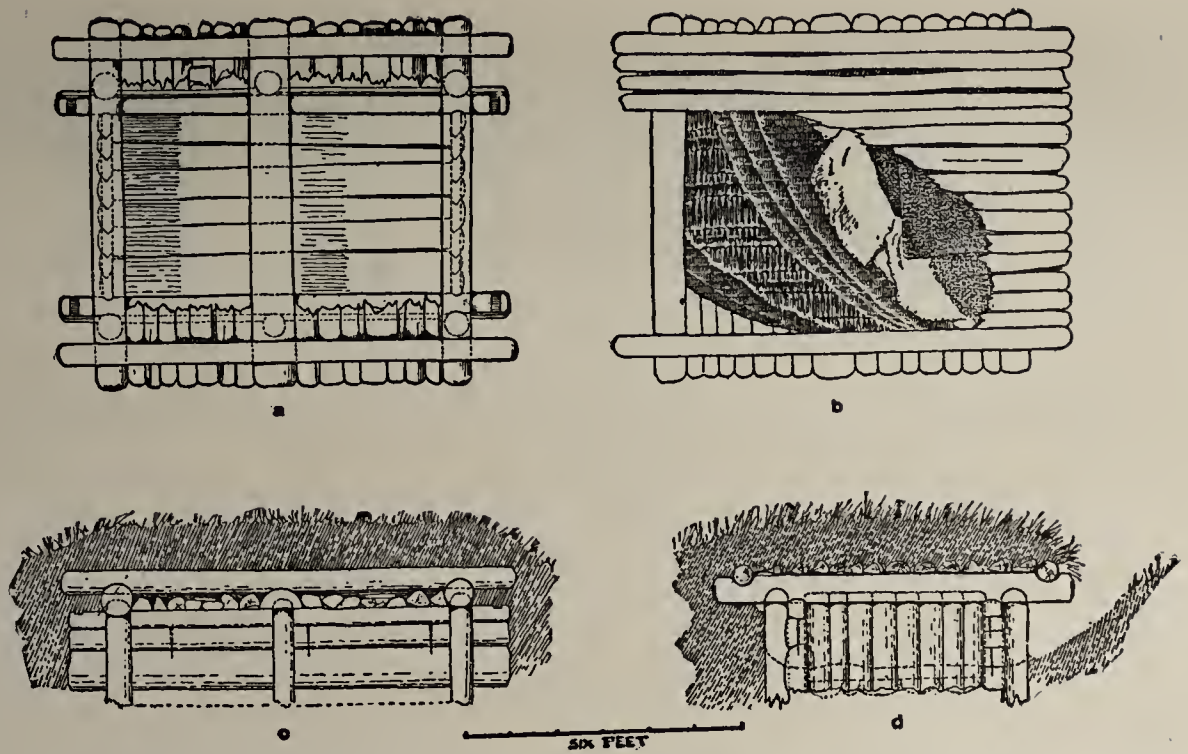
"A dice-box-shaped piece of fine-grained hard wood . . . is used for cutting the hair to an even length, on strips of skin used for trimming. The strip is wound spirally around the nearly cylindrical

bit of wood, fastened, and then, with a sharp knife (stone or iron) the hair is evenly trimmed. A flat board, on which the same might be done, and with the same amount of available surface, would be inconveniently large and awkward to carry about.

Sarytschew says that fine needles were traded to the Unalaskans 'which they used for puncturing instead of thread or horse-hair which they otherwise use [for this purpose].' Dall states, however, that 'the ancient Aleut women worked with awls formed of bird's bone ground on a stone.' Another comment of Sarytschew suggests a method different from that of puncturing. He tells how when the Aleut women receive trade needles they carefully break off the eyes and work a little notch around the dull end of the steel, to which they tie their sinew thread to draw it through the material to be sewed. . . .

"The even cutting of the nap of fur to produce various fringelike effects is commonly found on Arctic clothing. Nowhere, however, was this observed carried out to so fine a degree as on the clothing of this particular burial. Moreover, the technique of scoring larger surfaces at regularly spaced intervals was not observed from other regions.

"Aside from the technique of insertion by two edges, and the method of repeated scoring of the nap of fur, the Aleut work seems to be distinguished by its minuteness. Koryak embroidery and even the decorations of the Greenlanders are more complex, but nowhere was



THE MUMMY SARCOPHAGUS, *showing detail of its log construction. Diagram* A *shows the two compartments—the left one contained the chieftain's mummy, and the right one his "grave escort." Diagram* B *shows detail of two tiers of top logs with mattings and skins between. The lower diagrams are of side and end.*

workmanship observed which was as fine. A graphic picture of this minuteness can be gained from the following description by Dall of the decorations of a parka found by him in an early Aleut burial:

" . . . the yoke is an inch wide, exclusive of the fringe, and one of the strips is a quarter of an inch in width, leaving for the twelve other strips, of which it is composed (and which are to be distinguished only by the aid of a glass), scarcely more than six-hundredths of an inch each. Two of these strips are further ornamented, one being black with white reindeer hair stitches so intersected as to form a succession of small white crosses on a black ground; the other with the intersections of the white stitches at the upper edge instead of the middle, forming a continuous zig-zag line on a red base. . . . In the seam between the last two strips are inserted the filaments of which the fringe is formed. These are of young hair-seal skin, cut seven inches long and one thirty-second of an inch wide.

"To find in a climate where living conditions are as difficult as they are in the Aleutian Islands, a handicraft developed to so great a degree of fineness that much of the workmanship cannot be appreciated without the aid of a magnifying glass, is striking. Dr. Wissler suggests that this type of workmanship may well have been instituted originally by a near-sighted individual and become assimilated in the culture because of the prevalence of near-sighted individuals in the community. At any rate, it bears out Professor Boas' point, that the motive of the primitive artist is often his sheer delight

in the practice of his skill, rather than the anticipation of the appreciation which it will be accorded by his fellows.

"One of the most important points was, how old are they? When was the interment made? Many critics first objected that the wooden objects found with the bodies could not have lasted long in the humid climate of those islands. Yet no one could be sure as to this point, since insects seem not to have invaded the place, and the bodies were sealed in close wrappings of skin and seal intestine. Log houses have stood for two centuries when so placed to have adequate drainage. Dr. Jochelson, the aforementioned Russian scientist, stated to the author that he had no record of this form of burial having been practised for nearly two hundred years, the Russians having discouraged such practices. The proof, therefore, was to be sought in the mummies and the objects accompanying them.

"Shortly after the coming of the Russians, metal tools were introduced; one should be able to determine, therefore, if the objects of wood had been cut with metal or with stone tools. We have previously noted that no objects of European manufacture were found. In the laboratory of the museum Mrs. Margery L. Loeb had tests made with stone and metal tools; it was shown that all the marks of cutting on the objects taken from the burial corresponded to those upon similar wooden materials cut in the laboratory with stone tools. As far

as this goes there is no proof that metal tools were used. So although it is hard to believe that the burial could have been preserved in such a fine state for so long, other and more substantial circumstances indicate a greater antiquity.

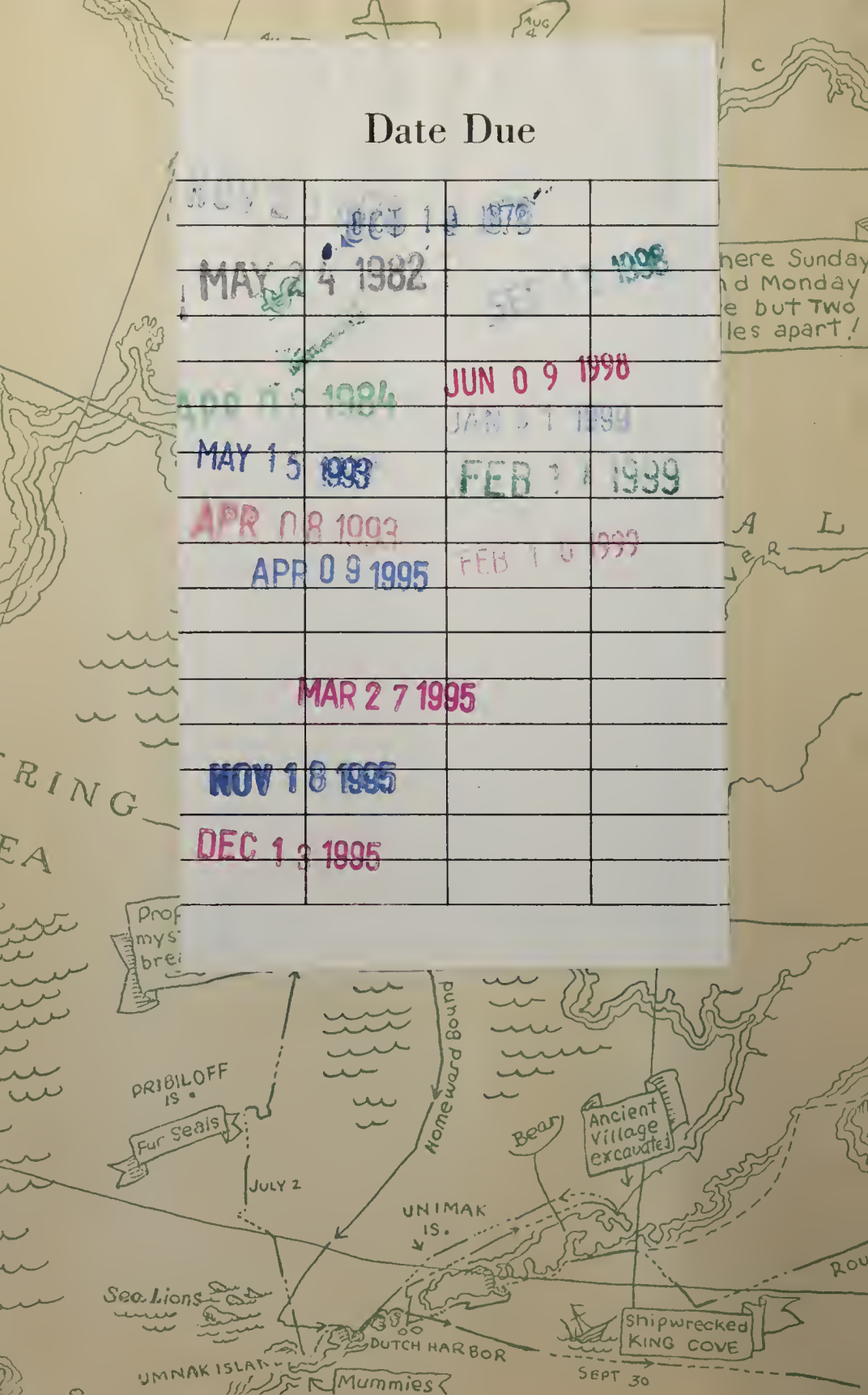
"It is apparent, therefore, that for all that could be learned from the objects themselves, the date of the burial may well have been before the time of the Russian occupation. We feel justified, in any event, in stating that whatever may be the antiquity of the remains, they relate to the time when the people of the islands were still living after the manner of the Stone Age."

To further support this Stone Age conclusion, I again quote Dr. Jochelson:[1]

"We may turn now to the question of the degree of culture possessed by the inhabitants of the islands who left us the remains of their food, manufactures, and dead. Of course, the Aleut of the shell-heaps lived in the Stone Age, but in what phase of that period? In this case the question concerns the degree of culture and not a period of time. Up to the present time it is only in the prehistoric archeology of western Europe that a definite correlation has been established between stages of primitive culture and time periods, between types of implements and other traces of man's activities and the age of the geologic strata or the fossils accompanying them.

[1]Waldemar Jochelson: "Archeological Investigations in the Aleutian Islands," Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1925, page 119.

Such a corresponding parallelism does not occur in the prehistoric remains of regions retarded in their cultural development. A few centuries ago the Aleut were in the same stage of culture as the prehistoric western Europeans were thousands of years ago."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